

REMARKS¹³

UPON A ^{695. 13}

SERMON¹³

ENTITLED,

The acceptableness of Sincerity to God: and the unprofitableness of a mere Speculative Faith to any Man's Salvation; considered.

WHEREIN

The danger of erring concerning necessary Truths; and the absolute necessity even of a Speculative Faith, in order to Salvation, are clearly proved from express Declarations of Scripture.

In a LETTER to Mr. Ball of Andover.

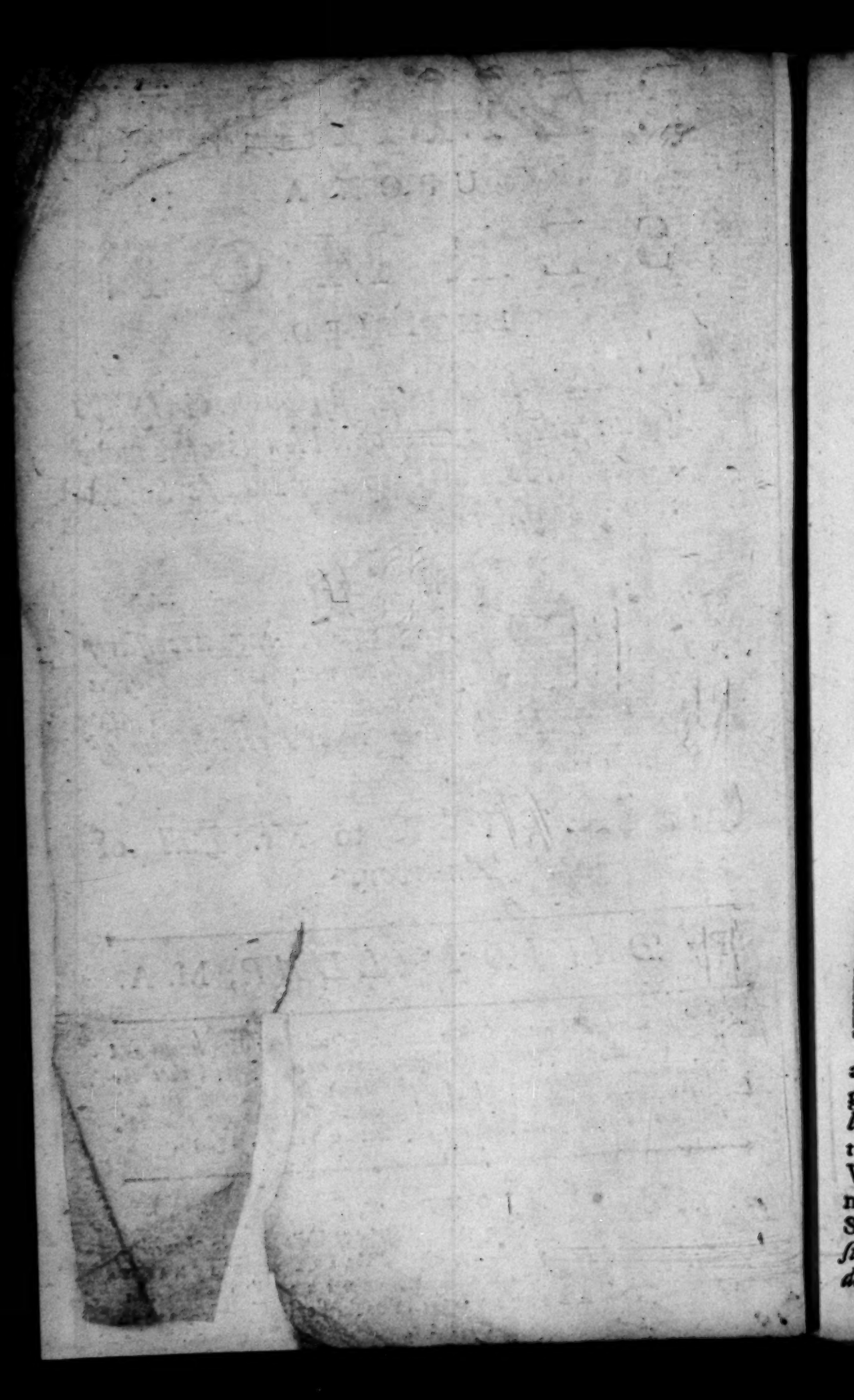
By DAVID MILLAR, M. A.

And their word will eat as doth a Canker, of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the Truth have erred, saying, that the Resurrection is past already; and overthrow the Faith of some. Nevertheless the Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his, &c. 2 Tim. 2. 17, 19.

L O N D O N,

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REMARKS
UPON A
SERMON, &c.
IN A
LETTER to Mr. Ball of
Andover.

Reverend Sir,

IT is so unusual a thing, to make any publick Remarks upon *occasional Sermons*, which generally (like *Jonah's Gourd*) *come up in a Night, and perish in a Night*; and much more on *Funeral Sermons*, which, if good for any thing, are commonly upon Subjects in which all agree; that you may perhaps think it strange that I give you this Trouble. The Discourse it self, is *indeed beneath all Notice*: But the Occasion, the *known Design*, the mighty Boasts that were made of it, the Insults and Wagers of some of your Friends, and my own Promise brought me to think it necessary. And seeing *the Substance* of your Sermon, is, I conceive, *opposite* to the Word of God, *every* of the Principles of the Reformation, and hath a *very dangerous* Tendency; I shall make no farther Apology for

this Letter. And you know, you could expect nothing less, after what is past.

I was very glad when Mr. *Bunny* desired me to preach his *Mother's Funeral Sermon* from *the same Text* which you chose for your Subject; it seemed to suit so well both with her *State* and *Hope*. In which, I have essayed, a little to open the *Scope* and *Import* of the Parable, after our *Lord*; to consider the true and full Character of *the Children of the Kingdom*, which in more or less agrees to them all, and that from the Context; and propose some *reviving* Thoughts upon their *future* Happiness, which naturally offered themselves from these words, *they shall shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father*. I thought my self obliged not to omit *that Righteousness* which gives them a *Claim* to, any more than *that* which *makes them meet* for the heavenly Glory. The former of which, you think *foreign to the present Subject*, reckoning it a *common Benefit* *; the latter, you have quite mistaken, as we shall see. Tho' it is impossible that any Man should be *righteous* before God, or an *Heir of the Kingdom* without *that*; or enter into it without Gospel Holiness, the Rule, Principle, and Means of which is *the Faith* of Christ; not that which we may think so, however sincere, but that which *indeed is so*.

In replying to your Discourse, I was at a Loss what Method to take, that I might do you *Justice*, and attain my *principal Ends*; which were to vindicate some refreshing Gospel Truths, inculcate the Necessity *even of a speculative Faith to Salvation*, instruct my own Hearers in some things of great moment, and preserve them from the *Infection* of your Sermon, and extravagant regard to your *Authority* at other times. At first, I attempted to draw out most of those Propositions in it, which appear to be *groundless* or *false*; to have given them in your own words, and *fixed* the Sense of them as well as I could, from the *Scope*, *Connection*, and other Passages to the same purpose, and to have replied to them distinctly. But when I had done it, I was afraid you would complain of *unfair Dealing*. It might have been said, that *Sentences* seem to have another *Sound*, as well as *Meaning*, when they are spoken or read *singly*, from what they have when they *stand in their place*, in a well connected Discourse; that I had not answered your *Sermon*, but only a few *loose, unguarded* Expressions in it. Some who know neither of us, and have not seen your Ser-

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mon, would have found it hard to believe, that so many things which have *no Connection* with each other, and *no manner of Foundation* in the Text or Context, could be found in *one Discourse*; nor did I think that it so well answered my *own Purpose*. And therefore I changed the Method, resolving to follow you quite thro' it, and take things as they came; and to answer what appears *most needful* at present, leaving *the rest*, at least, till a more proper opportunity offer. This seem'd to me, and I suppose will do to those for whom I chiefly designed this, to be *more candid and honest*; the more likely way to come at your *true meaning*, and to satisfy all, that if your *Sayings* are thought to be *impertinent* to your Subject, *inconsistent* with Scripture or each other, or very *loosely and confusedly* put together, I am not to bear the blame.

I have carefully studied your Discourse, compared all that relates to *the same Subject* together, that I might not mistake you; and have fairly and openly answered you, confuting what you have advanced without *Proof*, or *the least Shadow* of it, from *express Scripture Testimony*, *the Nature and Reason of Things*, or *the Absurdities* that clearly follow from them. I know it is a Principle which you have lately made much use of, that *we are not to mind Consequences*; tho all Men know that if the Premisses be clear and true, the Conclusion makes it self: And all honest Men who see the *evident Dependence* or *Connection* of one Proposition with another, will either *quit both*, or *hold both*. I have not however, loaded your *Sentiments* with many of the *Consequences* which necessarily follow upon them, and would make them appear more *odious*; but have oppos'd them more directly from the word of God, and obvious Reason, glancing only at a few of the more *clear and immediate* Conclusions, which can hardly be denied to flow from them. I have sometimes argued freely, *ad Hominem*, hoping to fix *the Conviction* more surely; but have laid no greater *stress* upon these, than such kind of *Arguments* may be supposed to bear. If any should say, that I have been too prolix, and have touched too often upon the same things; I answer, that the Circumstances of those, for whose sake I have written, made the first necessary, and you are the Cause of the last; since I have only followed you in all the Parts of your Discourse from the beginning to the end of it.

You begin, Page 3. and go on for more than four Pages, giving a sort of an Explication of the Parable, but in a very confused manner, tho our Lord has explained it to us in its
natural

natural Order. " Our Saviour is *the Seedsman* *; the Gospel
 " Doctrine is *the Seed* †; *the Field* is the *Community of Man-*
 " *kind* **; thro' Negligence there is often room left for the
 " Enemy to throw in the Tares *†; that both sprung up;
 " that they who brought forth good Fruit, are styled *the Chil-*
 " *dren of the Kingdom*; and those who suffered the Tares
 " to spring up, are *the Children of the wicked one* ††;"
 then you tell us what we must understand by the Tares,
 which you should have done sooner ***; but are longest
 upon the Servants haste, to gather up the Tares and burn
 them (tho the Servants use no such words) with several In-
 structions, Admonitions and Reproofs deducible from
 thence †††; tho our Lord has left us no Explanation of
these last Circumstances of the Parable.

We agree that our Lord is the chief, the great, the
 blessed *Sower*; the *under Seedsman*, as they receive *their*
Commission from him, so should they *the Seed* which they
 sow, begging his Blessing to make *them* and it successful.
 We learn from ver. 19. of this Chapter, that *the word of*
the Kingdom, (by which the Kingdom is revealed and of-
 fered, by the means of which Sinners are subdued, and
 made to yield themselves Members of it, which is the Law
 of the Kingdom, and the Rule of the Faith and Obedience
 of the Subjects of it, by a Compliance with which they are
 made meet for the Kingdom above) is *the good Seed*;
 which is all good, apt to make the Heart good, and suited
 to produce good Fruit. *The Field*, saith our Lord, is *the*
World; all Nations, as opposed to, or contra-distinguished
 from, the Kingdom and Church of the *Jews*. You, by a
 new Phrase, say it is the *Community of Mankind*, meaning,
 I suppose, all Nations where *the good Seed* is sown, and no
 other; for the Parable respects no Parts, no more of the
 World, but *the visible Church only*.

In the Parable we are told these instructing and beautiful
 Circumstances, *that when Men slept, the Enemy came, and*
sowed Tares among the Wheat, and went his way, Mat. 13.
 25. " Which, say you, aptly represents the secret Me-
 " thods, whereby thro' the subtlety of the Tempter, the
 " Mind may be influenc'd to a disregard of those Things of
 " which it is perceptive, and upon which spiritual Peace
 " and Prosperity depends." Had you added, *and to receive*
the Tares, we should have known your meaning: But
 what Sense you can make of these words, in a Consistency

* Page 3. † Ibid. ** Ibid. *† P. 4. †† P. 4. *** P. 5.
 ††† P. 5, 6, 7.

with your Discourse, I see not. These things are clear from the Parable. *The good Seed* is first sown; Truth is more antient than Error. Many grow sinfully careless of the good Seed, become slothful in keeping or improving it, begin to dislike and quarrel with it as mysterious, irrational, or inconsistent, &c. and consequently grow weary of it, as not so likely to answer the End; and therefore are disposed to receive other Doctrines, more agreeable to their own Inclinations. Upon this, the Enemy thro' the just Judgment of God is permitted, and readily takes the opportunity to sow his Tares by Tools, which he may find every where fit for this kind of Work; using all manner of subtlety in doing it, labouring not to be perceived, lest his design should be spoiled. You say, "that spiritual Peace and Prosperity depends upon those things of which the Mind is perceptive, before it receives the Tares," i. e. of the good Seed: or it is foreign to your Purpose, and has no Foundation in the Text. This is a great and important Truth; but it appears to me to be a direct Inconsistency with a great part of your Sermon; for Sincerity is a Man's Righteousness, this is your famous Principle*; and therefore Sincerity in Error, or receiving the Tares, is, or may be, as productive of Peace, as Sincerity in Truth. We have Reason, however to take heed, lest the Mind which is, or has been perceptive of Truth, be influenced to a disregard of it, as being above, contrary, or not suited to our common, or philosophical Notions; and to receive impious Falshood, tho' under the Pretext of new and clearer Light, or more distinct Ideas. If ever the Deceiver acts like himself, it is in sowing his Tares.

A little below, you very gravely tell us, that "we are not accounted good by the Seed that was sown, for that was common to all the parts of the Field, but by the Fruit we bring forth†". Truth: None are call'd the Children of the Kingdom, merely for receiving the good Seed, but for keeping and improving it also. But you forget that there were two sorts of Seed sown, and that Men are accounted good or bad, according as they receive, love, and improve the Wheat or the Tares. This forgetfulness or mistake is the Ground of a great deal of Confusion, quite thro' your Sermon. But I shall industriously wave such little things.

* Page 9. & 20.

† P. 4.

By *the Tares*, you let us know, that we are to understand, " either such as had an appearance of Fruit, referring to *ver. 29.* or, whatever is scandalous to the Christian Profession, *ver. 41.* or all Opinions, which obstruct " a Holy Life, or make Men Hypocrites in Religion *." It appears to me from the Parable, and the Explication of it, beyond any modest Doubt, that *the Tares* are *Seed*, Seed which is sown, and is apt to bring forth Fruit after its kind. That they are *Doctrines*, broached and vented under *the Notion of religious Doctrines*, sown as if they were the good Seed, and which Men may receive without an open Renunciation of the Christian Name. That notwithstanding this, they are *directly* and *wholly* opposite to the Nature, Design, and Spirit of the Gospel. That People, thro' the Cunning of Satan, varnishing them over with *plausible* Pretexts, and *specious* Appearances, may take them for the Doctrines of Christ; whereas they are indeed from the Devil. That they are *offensive* to true Believers, *naturally productive of evil* Practices, and therefore destructive to them who receive them, and in whom they grow up. That some of them may not be *easily* distinguished from the good Seed, but being of another Original, and leading to another End, there shall be an open Distinction made at last.

" They are either, say you, such as had an appearance of " Fruit." You should have said of *good Fruit*. For it is plain in the Parable that *the Tares* that were sown, sprung up, and brought forth *such* Fruit, as might be expected from *Tares*. *Such* sort of Seed meeting with a *kindly* Soil, if the Season also be *favourable*, generally prove very fruitful, grow luxuriant, to the great Sorrow, Fear, and Hurt of *the Children of the Kingdom*. The Tares that were sown being designed for the Field of the Church, must needs have *some Resemblance* to the Wheat, which might be received by, and spring up in, Persons professing Christ, and retaining still their Profession. *Heresies* are pretended to be agreeable to, and deduced from *the Scriptures*; yea, they are given out to be the *only rational*, and therefore *true* Explication of them. Herein is Satan's *Cunning*; this is indeed his *Master-piece*, to get them to pass for *the good Seed*. And as for the Fruits they produce, tho they may indeed have an *appearance* of good Fruit, yet *that* is all; there is nothing in them really good; which Christ will

reckon such. *False Doctrines* produce any thing rather than good Lives.

" Or else, whatever is scandalous to the Christian Profession; as all evil Practices are, *ver. 41.*" Remember that *the Tares* are *Seed*, and all is well. Erroneous corrupt Doctrines, with their genuine Effects, are *offensive* to all true Christians; and *as opposite* to Gospel-Truths, as gross Immoralities are to Gospel-Precepts. The vicious and wicked are certainly *scandalous* to the Christian Profession, tho it is not so certain, that *such* are intended in the Parable, unless they are led on to these *offensive Practices*, by some wicked *Opinions* or *Notions*, which produce or encourage such Licentiousness; in other words, by *receiving the Tares*.

" All Opinions which obstruct a holy Life, or make Men *" Hypocrites in Religion *.*" This is the first time you call *the Tares*, Opinions; tho it is evident from the Parable they are. And I readily grant that all *such Opinions* which obstruct Holiness are *Tares*. But then I must add, that *every* thing but *Truth, the Truth of God*, doth more or less *obstruct a Holy Life*. Some *Opinions* do this *directly*, either by leading Men *altogether* from the *Principle, Spring, Means* and *End* of Sanctification; or by countenancing and encouraging the most *unholy* Actions and Practices. Some do this *consequentially*, and *more remotely*, as they teach any thing inconsistent with the *Nature, Source, Root, Motives, Means, Example, or Form* of Gospel Holiness. If *Truth, Divine Truth*, is *the only Rule* of a Holy Life, and *the only means* of Sanctification, as is evident from Scripture, and the Nature of Things; then it is plain, that *Ignorance of this Rule*, and *these Means*, all *Misapprehensions* about them, and every thing *opposite* to them, must in one way or another, according to their Degree, Nature, and Tendency, *obstruct Holiness*. The *very Ignorance of the Rule*, or any part of it, must needs variously obstruct a holy Life: *Ignorance of the Means* also, cannot fail to have *this Effect*, and that in Proportion to the Degree of that Ignorance: for *the Means* are in some Sense the Cause which produce the Effect, and therefore that which mars *that*, must impede and obstruct *this*. All *mistakes* about *the Rule*, naturally produce *Omissions* in our Obedience, or *Commissions* inconsistent with it: And all *misapprehensions* about *the means*, do lead Men from the true use of *the right*

means ; or to *use other means*, as all do who misapprehend *the only means*, i. e. *the true Sense* of the Scriptures ; and then nothing can be expected but that Holiness will be obstructed. But when Men make use of *those means*, which are *directly opposite* to *the true means*, as many erroneous Persons do, and cannot but do, if they use *any means* at all ; it is evident that their *Heterodox Opinions*, according to *the number* or *quality* of the Errors, must egregiously obstruct *a holy Life*. If we consider *the assistance* of Divine Grace in this matter, we have *no Reason* to think that *the Spirit of God* will bless *any Means*, to promote *Holiness* but *those* that are appointed. There are *no Promises* to accept any Persons, but such as are found in *the way of Truth*. There are *no Instances* of those who were *truly Holy*, who were *drawn away*, or *fell from the Belief* of the Truth revealed in their several Ages, and *continued* in their Errors to the last ; *no not one*, in the whole Bible. Nor is there *any Aptitude* or *Suitableness* in Error, to conduce in *any Measure* to promote a holy Life ; nor can it possibly have any such Fruits. *Mistakes* of *any kind*, in the Understanding, do necessarily cause *Irregularities* in the Conversation ; and therefore *all Mistakes*, whether about the *Rule* or *Means* of Holiness, must one way or another obstruct *a holy Life*. Yea, *the very Imperfection* of the spiritual and saving *Knowledge*, of the Saints in this Life, is one chief Source of *the Imperfection* of *their Obedience* ; and it is evident, that while *they know but in part*, there will be still *some Defects* in their Holiness. But if we take *Error* for *Truth*, especially in Things *absolutely necessary*, the Case must be much worse ; *if the Light which is in you be Darkness, how great is that Darkness ?* Mat. 6. 23. I might expatiate on this *momentous Subject* ; but it is needless to bring a Candle to see the Sun.

As for the Phrase, " Opinions which make Men Hypocrites in Religion : " I confess I do not well understand it, nor is it easy to apprehend either the Propriety, or Sense of it. I suppose you mean, either *those Opinions* which teach that an *external Profession*, an *implicit* or *lifeless Faith*, will *recommend* them to God, or be *sufficient* for Salvation, without the *Renewing and Sanctification of the Spirit*, or the *Answer of a good Conscience towards God* *, &c. or, *those* which make Men *profess to be, what they are not*, pretending to Religion without any : or else *those Opinions* which

* 1 Pet. 3. 21.

teach that *some* Men have *the Power from Christ*, of *compelling* others to be of their Religion, or say they believe the Things which they do not believe; or of destroying their Fortunes, Lives, and Families if they do not comply; and which encourage them *zealously* to execute *this Power*. If you mean the first of these; I grant they are *Tares* of the worst sort, and that they teach Men to be *Hypocrites indeed*. Such Opinions do manifestly overturn all *true saving Faith*; all *Evangelical Holiness*; in a word, *all Religion*. If the second, I allow they are *Tares*, of a very dangerous kind: but then take Notice, that all *Heresies, fundamental Errors, or Opinions opposite* to any *Essentials* in Christianity, are of this sort. If you intend the last; I confess that they are *Tares* also of the most destructive Nature. But then, since I am disputing with Mr. Ball, we must distinguish between *the Opinions* of them that *compel*, and *make others Hypocrites in Religion*, in which they may be very sincere; and the *feigned Compliance* of those that are *compelled*. Those who say, that they believe what they do not, are guilty of a *Lye*; and if it should be granted that *the Principles* they are *forced* to profess are *true, the Truths of God*; yet such an *Hypocritical Profession* of them, can do them no Service. They do not *indeed believe* them, and so they can have no true, good Effect, either upon Heart or Life. But the Case is far otherwise with *those* whose *Opinions* make them think that it is *lawful*, yea a *Duty*, to *force* their Neighbours to *profess any Principles*, even the *best*, against their Consciences, and that under cruel Penalties, which may give a *pliability* to the Tongue, but cannot *enlighten* the Judgment. For they may *sincerely think*, that God has given *them or others* this Power; and that they are *bound* with all *their might* to put it in Practice; and that *Pity, or Compassion* to their Brother, is the greatest *Hatred and Cruelty*: And, "Sincerity (you know) is that Righteousness, which will render Men the proper Subjects of Divine Favour *." It is in vain to say, that *this Opinion* is *false*, and *wicked*, and that God has given them no such Power; since they *sincerely believe* that he hath. If you should say they are not, cannot be sincere; they can easily retort the Charge, and say the same of you: And, for ought I know, you may be *equally sincere*. I do not charge you with believing *this Opinion*, nor any such Consequence, which appears to be as *unjust* in it self, as it

is *opposite to the Spirit* of the Gospel. Nor do I think, that you suppose such Opinions *lawful*; or would desire to see them reduced to *Practice* amongst us, at this time; for, *Dissenters of all sorts, do as naturally cry for Toleration, as those that are uppermost cry against it.* But I do not see how you can possibly avoid the Conclusion, upon your Principles. For, “ a sincere Compliance with all that a Man can perceive to be the Mind and Will of God, whether in Things to be believed or done; and his Sincerity in acting up to his Light in his habitual Course, is his Righteousness*.” Those then, *who sincerely* think that it is agreeable to the Will of God, to *force* their Brethren to profess any thing, good or bad, which they do not think true, and so *make them Hypocrites in Religion*, are *acting* righteously; and their habitual Course in following *this their Light*, even to the Commission of such *crying, manifest Wickedness*, is their Righteousness. If I have mistaken the *Sense* or *Design* of the *Phrase*, I am remarking upon, I am sure I have not of the *Passages* last referred to, of which more hereafter: and therefore I charge *this* upon you, as a necessary Consequence of your Discourse, which must be *true*, or *it false*; and shall leave you to get clear of it, or defend it, when you can.

In the two next Pages, we have a great deal of “ the Servants haste, to gather up these Tares and burn them, with several Cautions, Instructions, &c.†” This is little to any Purpose, and therefore I shall pass it with a few brief Reflections. The Servants were not *precipitant* in judging; *they saw, they perceived the Tares*, and *knew them to be Tares*; nor are they blamed for their rash Censure. Nor does it certainly appear that they were in a *haste to have them burned*, nor did they speak one word of *burning*; perhaps they thought only of such a *Separation* from the good Seed, as might keep the Tares from infecting them with their Conversation, or might have a Tendency to make them (*the Tares*) *ashamed*, or *bring them to Repentance*.

The end of the severest of all Church Censures, *the delivering one unto Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh*, is, *that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus**.*

No Hatred of *these Tares*, no Malice against them, no Desire of their Ruin is here to be found. It is true, the

* Page 8, 9.

† P. 6, 7.

** 1 Cor. 5. 5.

Householder speaks of gathering them up, and burning them at Harvest time, ver. 30. This he might justly do, this he would do ; but it is not clear that they intended any such thing.

I agree with you, that we should not " too hastily condemn those Practices, which may have an appearance of Evil to us *." But we may freely condemn those which we see and know to be evil, as *the Servants* in the Parable *did* ; nor are they reprov'd for it. " We are not, I confess, to take unhallowed Methods to suppress what we may think Error †." No, nor are we to take *such* Methods to suppress or support anything, be it never so bad, or good : but we may, we should *reject and avoid the Erroneous* ** ; which the Holy Ghost would not have commanded us to do, if we cannot certainly know who they are, that are erroneous.

In the next Paragraph, you seem to suppose " that the Servants who had the Householder present, and in Judgment concurring with them that there were Tares coming up, as in the Parable ; had more *advantages* to help them to a right Judgment, than any now have ††," which in my Opinion is a Mistake. The Servants saw, and knew *the Tares, before* they spoke of *them* to their Lord ; and so may we. The Parable is a Representation of the State of *the visible Church* in all Ages, and therefore *the Householder* is supposed to be *equally present with them to the End* ; according to our Saviour's Promise, *Mat. 28. 20.* The *Householder's* Reply to *the Servants*, may perhaps be construed as a tacit Reproof, for their being too ready to *gather up the Tares*, or expecting a total separation of *them* from *the Wheat* in this World ; because they had not *duly* considered, what wise Reasons he had to give Order, that *both should grow together till the Harvest* ; but here is nothing like a Reprehension of them, for what they saw and knew.

You are troubled, that there have been " so many Anathemas of Synods and Councils, so many human Creeds and Tests of Christianity, such Pretensions to absolute Church Authority, &c. *†" I, for my part, freely declare, that I am no Admirer of absolute Church-Authority, and much less of such dreadful Sanctions as you intend : nor can I approve of that *strange Humour*, which has appeared in *many Synods*, of anathematizing their Brethren who hold the

* Page 6. † Ibid. ** Rom. 16. 17. ‡ Thess. 3. 6. †† P. 6.
*† P. 7.

Head, and agree in all the *Essentials* of Christianity with themselves. But cannot therefore decry all *CreeDs* and *Tests* of Christianity, tho you may call them *human* a thousand times over ; nor did I ever know any one that did, but such as knew that those *CreeDs* were against them.

There is one Sentence, however, which must not be slightly past over ; from which, tho you are far from speaking out, we may learn more of your mind, in a matter of the last importance, than from your whole printed Discourse. " That Men in undertaking that which they are by no means fit for, may censure that as idolatrous Practice, which may be the direct and only Homage that ought to be paid to the great Redeemer *." We know your meaning ; but should have been obliged to you, if you had told us what that direct and only Homage is, which none of your Party have yet done ; or shewed us, how the same Act of Worship can be direct and yet relative, supreme and inferior too ; which, as far as I can see, some Acts of Worship, upon your Principles, must be. This, perhaps, might have been done, had you favoured us with the Digression from the Pulpit, which, they say, was more than half an Hour long ; wherein you gave your Audience an Account of your Faith and Worship, and proposed a Creed, which, (in the Judgment of the Catholick Church) was human, or worse ; of which I cannot find one word but this and one other Sentence. But you would not do us this Service, " being perhaps afraid to venture Truth against Error, and " secretly suspecting the sufficiency of those Arguments " which were offered in Proof of your own Principles †."

The Christian Church did, in the first Ages, universally censure Creature Worship, as an Idolatrous Practice ; and so do all the Protestant Churches at this Day. And if the Scripture be Judge, their Censure is just. I shall take it for granted, that the great Creator, and the Creatures, comprehend all possible Beings : And that the one true God is the great Creator. Well then ; in Old Testament times, the first Commandment was a standing Law against all religious Worship of any but the one true God. This was a moral and unchangeable Law, founded in and resulting from the Nature of Things. All contrary Practices were simply, and universally condemn'd as Idolatrous. Our blessed Saviour has in so many words established this Law, yea, has made it rather more express, by adding the

exclusive Particle only : Mat. 4. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* So that one should think, that all who own our Lord for a divine Teacher, should readily and freely censure the Worship of any other but *the Lord our God, and him only*, as an *idolatrous Practice*. It is to be observed, that Satan did not require our Lord to worship and serve him as *God supreme* ; but that he would give him *religious Worship*, and testify it by that common Posture of Adoration, *Falling down before him*. Our Lord did not reply, by telling him, that the highest kind of religious Worship was due to *God supreme* alone, but that all religious Worship was *appropriated* to him ; and that *no kind, no degree* of it could be given to another. So that here is no place, no pretence left for *Creature Worship*, or any Worship that is *inferior* : All religious Worship is reserved *solely* to the Lord our God, and all Worship of him is *supreme*. But we are *commanded* to worship the Lord Jesus Christ : True ; and hence we draw an infallible Argument that *he is God most high*. When we worship him, we ascribe to him, *those Perfections and Attributes; that Glory and Dominion*, which are proper to *the one true God only*. We in the same Words, and with the same Breath say, *with every Creature which is in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all that are in them, Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever, Rev. 5. 13.* And we cannot but think it strange, that any who read these words, can deny that *the Lamb* has the very same Worship, with him that sits on the Throne. When we call upon him, we believe he is *present* with us, *sees and knows* our Wants, is *willing and able* to help us. In a word, the *direct Homage* we pay to the great Redeemer is this, *we honour the Son, even as we honour the Father **. Well, but we worship him, whom in *one* of his Natures at least, we own to be a *Creature*. Yes, we pay *this Homage* to him whom we believe to be *true God, and true Man* ; because we are no where directed to *divide his Person* ; but the *only Foundation* of this Worship, is his being *God supreme, the Lord our God*. But we praise and glorify him for his infinite Love, especially in *dying* for us, which is a part of Worship which cannot be *paid to the Father*. It is true, we do so ; and so we praise and glorify *the Father* for *choosing us in Christ †*, &c. giving us to him **, &c. which is a part of Worship which cannot

* John 5. 23. † Eph. 1. 4. ** John 17. 2.

be paid to the Son. But then it is obvious, that *these Considerations* are not the *formal Ground or Foundation* of our Worship, but *the powerful Motives* to excite us to it. These shew that *each Person* may be distinctly worshipped, upon the Account of some *special Mercy* enflaming us thereunto: but they do not prove that *one Person* has an infinite Nature and Perfections, and *the other* not: or that *one* of these sorts of Worship (if I may so speak) is *supreme*, the *other* *inferior*. In a word, when we worship *the Redeemer*, we do not worship a *mere Creature*, nor do we worship *him* as a Creature; but we worship *him*, *who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, yet for our sakes took upon him our Nature *, that by becoming our *near Kinsman* he might have a Right to redeem us, and the Inheritance for us. When we praise and adore him for *this*, it is plain we do not, cannot praise his *human Nature*, but *the blessed Person* who assumed it. We may indeed, in our Worship, think of the Love and Kindness of our Lord *as Man*; of those Bowels of Compassion and Tenderness which he *had*, and still *has* for us, whereby he *may be touched with a feeling of our Infirmities*; we ought to encourage our selves from *this* Consideration, under all present Difficulties, and be excited to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in every time of need, which is the very use the Apostle makes of this †. But we are never in our Thanksgivings and Worship to divide his Person, or look upon him as being two Persons, or consider his Humanity as *abstracted* from his Divinity; but to remember *the Divine Person* in whom, and by whom, it subsists. We do not ascribe Divine Perfections and Glory to his *human Nature* considered *separately*, but to *him who is God and Man*, because he is God, God most high. Yea, when we return our hearty Thanks to Christ, for, and upon the Account of his Sufferings in our stead, we are to remember that it was by *the Eternal Spirit*, the Divinity, in which his Humanity subsisted, that he offered up himself **; and therefore when we worship him who is *the Son of God*, and *the Son of Man*, we worship and honour him even as the Father; as he is, and because he is *the Son of God*, one with him, therefore *the Lord our God*.

But what do *Arians* say to this; or *those* who, tho they disown that odious Name, yet deny the Son's *Co-essentiality*

* Phil. 2. 6, 7. † Heb. 4. 15, 16. ** Heb. 9. 14.

with the Father, thereby making him a *Being infinitely inferior* to him, and therefore a *Creature*, which is the very *Essence of Arianism*? What can the *Socinians*, who believe him to have been a *Man by Nature*, and no more, whatever *he has been made since*, say to this? Can they find out any *Expedient*, to make our Lord's *express Prohibition* consistent with the *Worship of a Creature*? Yes, they talk of *supreme and inferior Worship*; of *mediate and ultimate Worship*; of *absolute and relative Worship*; of *Worship divine in the highest Sense*, and *mediatorial Worship*, which is either not *Divine*, or in a lower *Sense only*. But do the *Scriptures* give any *Countenance to such Distinctions*, or any *Allowance for Creature Worship*? No, they do not, neither in *word nor deed*; neither by *Example*, nor *Precept*, nor *Promise*; no nor cannot, unless they are *inconsistent* with themselves, and *directly contradict* many *express Commands*, which are founded upon *eternal, evident Reason*. It is in vain to plead a *positive Precept* against an *absolute moral Law*, which cannot be altered without changing the *Nature of things*, and the necessary relation between the *Creator and the Creatures*. Besides, do our *Adversaries* tell us, what the *direct and only Homage* is, that ought to be paid to the great Redeemer? Or how we are to *regulate* our *Thoughts, Words and Actions* in our *Worship of two Objects infinitely distinct*, and distant in *Nature and Perfections*? Do they tell us, whether we may worship the *SON immediately*; and if we do, what *Perfections and Glory* we should ascribe to him, what *Things* we may ask of him; or how such a *Being as they make him* can be *present* with all his *Worshippers at once*, can *see and know* their wants, *bear or answer* their *Prayers*? No, they do not, they (in my *Opinion*) cannot; but, perhaps, *you* may help them out here. I shall only desire you seriously to consider and answer this *Question*: Did our *Saviour* in that *Reply of his to Satan*, *Mat. 4. 10. include, or exclude himself*, from the *only Object of Worship*? If he included himself; then *he with the Father are the Lord our God, the him whom we are only to serve*; *he with the Father is the one true God*: And all the *Arians, Socinians, and New-Scheme-Men* in the *World*, who give him religious *Worship*, and yet deny *this*, are evidently *Idolaters and Blasphemers too*. If he did exclude himself; I ask you, how any *Command to worship any other Object* can possibly be consistent with *this*? Does he not in so many words say, *him only shalt thou serve*? Can you soberly think that these words left room for bringing in *another* afterward? Did *this Command* bind only *then*,

or might it be altered *at Pleasure* ; or is not any such supposition a giving our Lord *the Lye* ? Can a *Precept* resulting from the *Nature* of Things, and which is *good* in it self, antecedently to any such Command, be *altered*, while the *Nature* of Things continues the same ? Can any thing which is *in it self in all respects* sinful, by *any Command* be made lawful ? Nor is there any Place left to say, that he excluded all other Objects of *supreme* Worship, of *the same* Worship which is *appropriate* to God ; but not an Object, or Objects of *inferior* Worship : For the *very words* will for ever contradict such a supposition. *Satan* did not require *supreme* Worship, and our Lord *absolutely* excludes *all other* Objects of religious Worship but *one, the Lord our God and him only* ; and consequently all *kinds or degrees* of religious Worship but what may be paid to *him alone*. I shall therefore conclude, that *the direct and only Homage* which ought to be paid to the great Redeemer, is that which ought to be paid to the Lord our God, and *him only* ; that consequently he is *the Lord our God* ; and that all *Creature Worship* is an idolatrous Practice : And shall leave you to answer this, at your Leisure.

Before we proceed, it may be proper to consider an Objection, which was proposed by a judicious Friend against one thing in my Sermon ; and to offer a few more Thoughts, to illustrate what I have said both *here and there*, upon the Parable of the Tares of the Field.

Having observed that one part of the Righteousness of the Children of the Kingdom was, that *they received not the Tares*, I added, *pag. 22.* " And it cannot be too much regarded, that amongst all those, who, either in the Old or New Testament, are called *sincere, upright, blameless, or righteous*, there is not *one* of them, *no not one*, who received false Opinions or heterodox Notions, or swerved from the Faith of the Church of God, according to the measure of the Revelation they were blessed with, in their several Ages ; *but understood, and held fast the Rule of Faith.*" This Remark startled my Friend, who could hardly think it true ; nor did it appear very consistent with the words in the very next Page, *viz.* " God may permit his Children for a Time, for ought I know, not only to *doubt of some necessary Truth*, but to receive *some of the Tares*, and may afterwards give them *Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth*, 2 Tim. 2. 25." They shall not die in Unbelief or dangerous Errors.

The Observation is indeed *affecting* and *rousing*, but I believe it will hold good. I have been long of this mind, which made me look upon Error with another Eye than many do; and think no mistake, no not the least, as an *indifferent* Thing. And hence I learned to be *careful*, as of my Soul, to receive *nothing* in Religion for Truth, which I could not find in my Bible: and to reject *nothing* which I saw there, however *sublime*, *mysterious*, *incomprehensible*, or *contrary to common Notions*, or *vain Philosophy* it seem'd to be. I was sure that *the Bible* is the word of God: that all that God says is true, that he *designed* to be understood; that he would not *deceive* me, that *necessary* Truths must be known, were *clearly* revealed and *might* be known; that things are as God says they are: And therefore I durst not *doubt*, when he affirmed; ask *how*, when he thought not fit to reveal; or *reject* what I might, or did know, because I could not know all things; nor did I ask *any other Foundation* of Faith, but *his Authority* alone; and was always best satisfied, and had most Peace, when I rested *solely* on this.

As to the Objection, let it be considered; that there are *Degrees* of Grace, Obedience and Holiness, as well as Knowledge in the Saints. All that are *truly* so, are not called *sincere*, *upright*, *blameless*, or righteous: No, this is the Character only of those, who have arrived at *higher Attainments* in Faith and Piety; who are more than ordinarily *strict*, *watchful*, *diligent*, and *fruitful* in the ways of Truth and Sanctification. And I must say it again, I can not find *one*, *no not one* in the whole Bible, *so characteriz'd*, of whom the Remark is not certainly true. But as there are *strong Men*, so there are *Babes* in Christ, whose *Proficiency* in Knowledge, Faith and Obedience is but small. It was with respect to these, that I was willing modestly to doubt, whether God might not permit some of them for a time, to doubt of some *necessary* Truth, and to receive *some of the Tares*. I did not dare be positive in this, and therefore said, for ought I know; for there are *few*, if *any* Instances in Scripture, of any who were *truly* Saints that fell into any great Error concerning the Faith, or doubted of any *necessary* Truth after it was *clearly* revealed. All the Examples in the Old Testament, which occur at present, and can with any shew of probability be pleaded against this, are *Gideon*, *Solomon*, *the Worshipers on the high Places*, and *the Worshipers of the Calves at Dan and Bethel*.

Gideon after his Victory over the *Midianites*, made an *Ephod*, and put it in his City, Judg. 8. 27. He was a good

Man, might be led into this Error by a *mistake*, ch. 6. 26. and seems to have had a good Design in it ; yet it was his great Sin, and proved a Snare to the People, and the Destruction of his Family: for it is said, *and all Israel went thither a whoring after it ; which Thing became a Snare to Gideon and to his House.* But it was not a Sin against any *Fundamental Truth*. The Case of *Solomon* is more difficult. *Solomon*, the saddest Instance of the *weakness* and *wickedness* of the *wisest* Men when left to themselves, that ever was ! We may read his Sin, 1 *Kings* 11. 4—9. And yet I cannot think that his *Mind* and *Judgment* was changed about the true God and Idols : or that he took the *Abominations* of the *Heathens* for true Gods, or the Worship of them, for lawful Worship. He might give way to the importunity of his Wives ; and as the way of Sin is a *steep Descent*, when he was once in it he went farther and farther. He seems to have been *intoxicate* with Sin, and to have been in their Case who go on to do, or connive at, what they *dare not approve* : So that I incline not to reckon him among the *erroneous*, or a *Wanderer* from Truth in *Judgment*, approving what he did ; but a *Deserter* of it in *Practice*. Those that worshipped on the *high Places*, did it against an *express* Command, and are ever blamed for it, as their Sin : tho they might suppose it *lawful*, or at least plead many things to excuse or extenuate it. But it was only a *Circumstantial* in Religion, and not so properly an *Article* of Faith. And yet, it is worthy of the most *serious* regard, that none that did it, are ever, I think, said to be *sincere* or *upright*. The Case of the Worshipers of the *Calves* is the most difficult of all. It is hard to think, that all the *Ten Tribes*, from the *Schism* in the Reign of *Jeroboam* to their *Captivity*, perished eternally ; and yet they were guilty of a very great Sin, the direct and designed Breach of the *second Commandment* ; and are charged with *Idolatry* and *worshipping of Devils*, 2 *Chron.* 11. 13. But we must observe that the *Priests* and *Levites* left their all, and went and dwelt in *Judab* and *Jerusalem* ; and all such as set their Heart to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to *Jerusalem* to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their Fathers, 2 *Chron.* 11. 13, 14, 16. This perhaps might be the Case generally, for any thing appears to the contrary.

Some of them did so long after, in the Days of *Hezekiah*, 2 *Chron.* 30. 11. Many of them might never join in the Worship of the *Calves*, having the *Schools* of the *Prophets* with them to instruct them in the true Religion, in that State of Extremity. And if any truly pious ever joined them-

themselves with *those Backsliders*, (which I dare not say they did not) they did it out of Necessity, having no other opportunity *publickly* to worship God ; this they might do, and yet abhor what was amiss in the Worship, and heartily pray for and desire a Reformation. Let it however be remembred, that there is no instance, *no not one*, that any who *truly feared the Lord*, *erred in Judgment*, and *approved* those ways of Sin, or the Principles and Opinions which gave rise to and encouraged *those Abominations*. And therefore nothing follows against me.

In the New Testament, the only Case I think that can be urged, is that of *the Disciples* ; but it is obvious, nor is it easy to answer it. They seem to have been *wholly ignorant*, at least had *very confused Notions* of our Lord's *Sufferings*, their *Design*, his *Resurrection*, &c. These were *necessary* Articles of Faith ; it is hard to think that *sincere Enquirers* could be ignorant of them, or how *saving Faith* could subsist without some Knowledge of them. To this I offer these Considerations. The Disciples were all *illiterate* Men, most of them of the *meanest* Parents and Education ; probably all *Galileans*, a dull, heavy, and unpolished sort of People, and remote from *the Seat and Place* of the publick Worship of God ; that they were bred up in all *the Prejudices* of their Countrymen in *that degenerate Age*, which it was not so easy for such to get over ; and had their Heads so filled with the Notion of *the Kingdom of the Messiah*, that they could hardly think of any thing else, much less of what seem'd inconsistent with it : *which Prejudices* might be strengthened, by their being called to be *Apostles*, and by *the subject* of their Sermons, *the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, Mat. 10. 7. When they were *chosen* by our Lord, they were sufficiently fitted for their *immediate* work, without any *apprehension* of these, as far as appears. The Prophecies relating to *the Sufferings of the Messiah*, I confess, are many, and seem tolerably clear ; those of *his Resurrection* were not so, but were expressed in more *obscure Metaphors*, and prefigured by very *dark Types*, which might be the occasion of their Mistake. But then we should remember, they never *denied* what our Lord told them of his Sufferings and Resurrection, only *Peter* out of a carnal Fondness for his Master, would have had him *spare himself*, for which he was severely rebuked, Mat. 16. 22, 23. And after they were told of his *Resurrection*, they seem not to have been sufficiently come to themselves, but were soon satisfied in it, even *Thomas* himself. So that it was ignorance in them, rather than Error : Mark tells us, *they understood not that saying,*

saying, ch. 9. 10, 32. Yea, *Luke* assures us, that *it was hid from them, that they perceived it not*, ch. 9. 45. Yea, this is expressed more strongly, *ch. 18. 34.* There seems to have been some *special* Reasons in Providence, why *those Things* were not at that time, to be clearly known by them. The best Lesson we can learn from thence, I think is, that very *low Degrees* of Knowledge, and very *confused and imperfect* Conceptions of things, may be very consistent with much *Honesty of Heart*, and much *Love* to Christ. After all, this was their Weakness, for which they were often upbraided; *it was no part of their Righteousness*; yea, it was their Sin. Thus I have considered all that can be well objected against me, and shall offer a few Conclusions from the whole. The first Remark, I conceive, is universally true, and without any Exception. There is no Instance of a *good Man's* refusing to believe when things were *clearly* revealed, but *Thomas* only. No Example can be produced of a *good Man's* erring from the Faith, after he had received it. And, I conceive, there is no Instance in the New Testament of an *erroneous Person* who wandered from the Truth received, and was afterward converted. The Lord impresses these Thoughts upon us, for they are dreadful and very moving.

It must be observed, that whatever mistakes the Disciples had about *the Sufferings* of Christ, however ignorant they seem to have been about his *sacerdotal Office*; yet they never had any doubts about his *Divinity*. They had a firm and constant Belief of *this*, that *he was the Christ, the Son of the living God*, Mat. 16. 16. This Phrase and the Sense of it was then known, and seems to have been universally received, *John 11. 27. Acts 8. 37.* This Remark appears to me to be of great weight.

The Propositions which I thought good to offer by way of Illustration, are these.

The good Seed, is *the word of the Kingdom*, the Doctrines of the Gospel; which have some suitableness in their own Nature, and which by the Institution of Christ, and his Promise to bless them, are *means* to renew our Minds, and reform our Conversations.

The Tares, are *Seed* also, *Doctrines relating to Religion*, but of another Original, a contrary Kind and Tendency, which when received are considered as *necessarily* influencing both Heart and Life.

No *Doctrines*, but *the Doctrines of Christ*, can by any Institution, or Promise, or any aptitude in themselves, or any other way, be supposed to promote any *true, evangelical Holiness*.

Two *contrary Expositions* of the same Text, can't be both the mind of God in that Verse. Or thus, two *Propositions* directly contradictory to each other, cannot possibly be both true, or both the good Seed. So that if this Proposition, *The Son is equal in Nature and Perfections with the Father, or is Co-essential with him*, be true, that which is contrary to it must needs be false.

From *Truth* nothing can follow but *Truth*; and from *Error* nothing but *Error*. And therefore, upon supposition that the first Proposition be true, all Consequences which necessarily flow from it, must be true also; and then all that necessarily arise out of the other, must needs be false. Therefore the Belief of one or the other of these Propositions must needs be very dangerous, and have a most mischievous Influence both on the Heart and Life. Seeing that these Propositions in their Consequences run thro' the whole of our Religion.

The *Knowledge* and *Belief* of Gospel Truths, are as absolutely necessary to Gospel Holiness, upon all the Accounts abovementioned as the *Knowledge* and *Belief* of Gospel Precepts. Nor can any Man follow Gospel Holiness without some true Knowledge of them. *The way of Holiness, is the way of Truth.*

Gospel Truths, strictly so called, are a *Body of Doctrines* consistent with each other, yea, which are closely and necessarily connected; and which cast a mutual Light upon, and reciprocally suppose or support each other. *Truth is an even, uniform Thing, consistent with it self and every other Truth.*

Errors in Religion, are a *Body of Doctrines* proposed as *Christian*, which do more immediately or remotely oppose and contradict, more or fewer of the Truths of Christ. They are of divers kinds, some more, some less dangerous: and may be opposite to, and destructive of each other. *Falshood is multiform, Error various: nor is it consistent with it self or any thing else.*

Erroneous Persons or those who receive the Tares, may be all comprehended under these Three. Some retain the Foundation, but build upon it Wood, Hay, Stubble, 1 Cor. 3. 12—15. Things which may be unworthy of, unsuitable to, and differ from, but do not destroy the Foundation. *These may be saved, yet so as by Fire.*

Some profess to retain the Foundation, but seem to lay another. The whole Compages of Popery appears to me to be of this sort. The Romanists retain all the Necessary, Foundation Truths; but seem to have advanced others,
incon-

inconsistent with, if not destructive of them. Their Case must be very dangerous.

Some *directly overturn the Foundation* (Christ himself, and the Doctrines relating to his Person and Office,) *even when they profess to retain it.* All the *Catholick Trinitarians*, or all their *Adversaries* are guilty in this matter, as I have observed elsewhere. Those that are erroneous in these Points, are, perhaps, in the greatest and most unavoidable Danger of all.

Some Difference should perhaps be made betwixt those *who received the Tares with their Education*, especially if such be denied *the use of their Bibles*: And those *who received the good Seed with their Education*, or otherwise, believed or said they believed the Truth, *perhaps taught it*, but at last have received *the Tares*, and are ten times more zealous and forward in sowing them, than ever they were in sowing the good Seed, whatever may be said for those, 'tis hard to frame any excuse for these. They had need to consider not only their own Sin and Danger; but the Sin and Danger unto which they lead others. But we shall pass these.

Having come to your Text, the first thing you propose to enquire is,

“What that Righteousness is, which will render Men
“the proper Subjects of Divine Favour, when *God shall*
“*judge the World by Jesus Christ.*”

I must say, that this last Phrase, in this place appears to me offensive. How came it in here? There is no such Expression in the Text, or Context. The *Son of Man* is the Judge, *ver. 41.* The Expression, *God shall judge the World by Jesus Christ*, is but *twice* found in the Bible: whereas Christ is in many Texts said to be *the Judge of the World*. The two Places where your Phrase is found, are not to your purpose, had they answered your End, they should have run thus, *the Father shall judge the World by him.* But no such Expression is to be met with in Scripture: Yea, our Lord assures us, in so many words, that, *the Father judgeth no Man*, John 5. 22. God and Father are not reciprocal Terms. The word *God* in one of the Texts is not opposed to the word *Son*, but to *the Man Jesus Christ*; see *Acts 17. 31.* and compare it with *John 5. 27.* and probably it is so in the other. I am far from disliking the Expression, when it is found in *its place*, but think that you need not have gone so far from your Text for it, in the present Case. Are you indeed afraid of using any Phrases of the Son, that sound too high?

high? But it has been often observed, that those Men, who with the Apostle take great Care to inculcate that the Father is above all; are as careful to use no Words or Phrases of the Son, which may seem to clash with this assertion, or suppose that he is equal with him: and tho they may sometimes call him Divine, yet do not, cannot tell us, what this his Divinity is.

Your Answer to this Inquiry runs thus, "It is their Fidelity or sincere Compliance with all that they can perceive to be the Mind and Will of God, whether in things to be believed or done, according to the different Ages in which they have lived, the different Circumstances in which they are placed, and the diversity of Light or any other Assistance with which they are furnished. But understanding by Happiness, strictly speaking, the Christian Salvation, the Righteousness which qualifies for the heavenly State, is a sincere and faithful Conformity to the Mind and Will of God, as delivered by Christ and his Apostles, as far as we can perceive it.

"The Principle on which Men are denominated Righteous, is one and the same in all People, at all Times and Ages, even their Fidelity. But the matter of it is as different as the Truths or Things are, which are represented or proposed to the Mind. From whence it comes to pass, that the same Rule, whether it be considered as teaching things to be believed, or prescribing what is to be done, must, as to its obliging Power, be limited by the Capacity of the Subject; and his Sincerity in acting up to his Light in his habitual Course, is his Righteousness."

I freely own, that our *sincere Compliance* with the Mind and Will of God, both as to Faith and Practice, is our *Duty*. That we are oblig'd to *improve our Talents*, and that in proportion to their Nature, and Number. That, as *more* is given to those who live under the Gospel Dispensation, than to others; so *more* will be required of them. That Believers are frequently in *Scripture* denominated *Righteous*, from their *inherent personal Righteousness*. That this consists in their *Sincerity* in acting up to the *Rule of the Gospel*, in their habitual Course, according to the measure of their Gifts and Graces, by the Assistance and under the Conduct of the quickening, sanctifying Spirit. And that *actual Faith and Obedience* shall not be required of Subjects altogether incapable of them. But several things in these Paragraphs are of great Importance, and must be carefully observed upon, that we may the better know what we are doing.

It appears, that you intended that this answer should reach the Case of *all Men* that ever lived or shall live, at all Times, Ages, or Places, as well *without* as *within* the Pale of the visible Church; *Heathens, Mahometans, Jews,* and all others. Now, the *Parable* is a Representation of the *Gospel-Church only*, and therefore you had no Business without and beyond it. If we look into the Scriptures, we shall find that the Case of all Nations *to whom the Word of the Lord never came*, or from *whom it is removed*, is very forlorn and miserable: And how can it be otherwise with them who are destitute of the *only Means* of Grace, and *the only Rule* of Faith and Holiness. It is expressly said that the believing *Ephesians*, before the Gospel came among them, (who were not in *this*, I think, worse than their Neighbours) *were without Christ, having no Hope, and without God in the World*, Eph. 2. 12. and the State of those from whom *the Candlestick is removed*, is not, I conceive better; but in some sense worse. But whatever may be said in *their* Favour, no *such Excuse* can be offered for those, who having the Bible, *receive the Tares*. The Context is express as to *their* Fate: *It shall be more tolerable, at the Day of Judgment for those, than for these*, Mat. 11. 22.

These Paragraphs, especially if compar'd with pag. 16. and 27. of which afterwards, seem also to shew, that *sincere Inquirers* into the Mind of God written in his Word, may *mistake the Sense* of it even in necessary Things; so *mistake it* as to believe what is *directly contrary* to it, and to the whole Bible: yea, and that their acting up to what they (after this Inquiry) *think* to be the Will of God, tho it may indeed *be a dangerous, fundamental Error*, is their Righteousness. It is not easy to come at your meaning in these general sayings; and I know with whom I am dealing: If therefore I have *mistaken* your Sense, *here* or *any where else*, I impute it not to you, nor dispute against you, but against the *things supposed*. It seems you were afraid to speak out, tho we know you can speak plain enough, on these Subjects, at other times.

As to the former, that *sincere Inquirers* may *mistake* the meaning of all those Passages in the Bible, which respect any *necessary* Truth, any of the *Essentials* of Christianity, so as *sincerely* to embrace the contrary Errors as the mind of God: and in particular, *all* the Texts relating to *the Doctrine of the Trinity*, and that *so much*, and *so far*, as to take Infinite for Finite, Eternal for what had a Beginning, God for a Creature, &c. I freely declare, I know not how to think
it,

it. All *necessary* Things are clearly revealed, in some Place or Places : *He that runs may read them.* Nor dare I doubt of *this*, without *detracting* egregiously from the *Perfection* and *Perspicuity* of the Scriptures, and *impeaching* the *Wisdom* or *Goodness* of God in giving them. Much less can I think, that two Persons of *equal* Capacity and Ability, using *equal* Diligence, can *mistake* so far in *this* or *any other necessary* Doctrine, as to go into Opinions diametrically opposite ; and be *equally* sincere too. On one side, or the other, there must be *some want* of true Sincerity, *something* very culpable, *some* Prejudice, Party-Interest, preconceived Tenet, Lust, or Hatred of the Truth leading them aside. In most Cases, 'tis too visible, that natural Levity, Pride, Vanity, Ignorance, Haste, Sloth, outward Interest, Hatred of some Men, and Admiration of others, and not a sincere Inquiry, draw Men into, and keep them in the Belief and Love of dangerous Errors. But whatever may be said to *this* ; the *other thing* is that which your Discourse seems directly and chiefly to lead to, viz.

That if a Man (after what you call a *sincere and diligent Inquiry*) should *mistake*, and not only *err* but *err grievously* from the Truth ; yet his *Sincerity* in acting up to what he *thinks* is the Will of God, i. e. to *these his Errors*, is so far from being *sinful* or *dangerous*, that it is his Righteousness. I believe *this* to be the *direct* meaning and scope, or *necessary* Consequence of these Paragraphs ; the *known design* of your Discourse confirms me in it ; and you expressly tell us, " that God will approve the erroneous that " are sincere and diligent *." But whatever you think, *this* is a *dangerous* Error, *void* of all Proof, *absurd* in it self, *directly contrary* to Scripture, and to the Parable in particular. No Proof, or *shadow of Proof* is, or can be offered to support it. It supposes that Men may err from the *only Rule*, without *Danger* ; mistake the *only Means*, and yet *reach the End* ; which are *palpable* Absurdities. It supposes that *Error which is Darkneſs*, is indeed *Light* ; yea, a *sufficient Light* ; and that the *Fruits* of Error are our Righteousness. A monstrous Assertion ! It supposeth that the *troubled, muddy, noisom Streams* of Error, are the *pure, clear Waters* of the Sanctuary, or as good ; that *Poison* is *wholesom Food*, and that the Soul may be nourished by it : that the *Tares* are *Wheat*, or equally useful and profitable ; and that the *crooked Path* of Error is as *safe*, as

the plain, even way of Truth, and will lead to the same End. All of them big with enormous Folly and Impiety ! In a word, it overturns one chief Foundation of moral Virtue, or Truth, which is that *we treat every thing as it is*, that I may use the words of a late ingenious Author. How is this possible, if Men know not, or disagree about the Nature and State of Things. To give an Instance ; you or I do not treat Christ as he is ; do not speak to him, or of him, as he is ; neither praise, worship, love nor serve him as he is : You or I do not treat the Holy Ghost as he is ; one of us believing him to be infinite in Nature and Perfections, the other not ; and therefore are guilty of manifest Wickedness and Impiety, condemned even by the Light of Nature. Let me add, you or I treat not God the Father as he is ; one of us being persuaded from Scripture, that he is necessarily a Father, having an eternal, only begotten Son, of the same Substance and Perfections, subsisting in and with him, from whom he has no separate or divided, separable or divisible Existence ; the other, to the best of my knowledge, rejecting every word of this. We had need to consider the Consequences, and how far these affect the very Foundation of all Religion. In fine, the Proposition I am now confuting, puts Truth and Falshood upon the same Foot, destroying all the Boundaries between Piety and Impiety. It calls evil good, and good evil ; it puts darkness for light, and light for darkness ; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, Isa. 5. 20. Remember the Woe annexed. It is contrary to the whole Scripture, which requires the Belief of the Truth ; what is Truth as it is revealed, not what we may think so. It is diametrically opposite to the Scope of this Parable, according to which, those only who received the good Seed, are the Righteous : whereas those that received the Tares, even tho they might very really believe them to be Truths, and agreeable to the Will of God, yet are cast into a Furnace of Fire. Indeed your whole Discourse on this Head, is a manifest Contradiction to the Parable. From all which we conclude, that Fundamental Errors must needs be extremely dangerous ; and that Errors even in lesser matters, cannot possibly be any part of our Righteousness. The Truth is, these words most directly contradict each other ; what is Error cannot be Righteousness, and what is Righteousness cannot be Error.

When you speak of this sincere Compliance with the Will of God, you over and over add, *so far as we can perceive it*. Now whether you perceive it or not, this overturns your whole Design. For the Caution supposeth, that it is still
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the Mind and Will of God which we perceive; but Error is no part of his Mind and Will. When we *misapprehend* the Words of God, it is not the Mind of God, which we perceive, but our own Mistake, and what we *falsely misapprehend* for his Will. We may perceive *some* of his Mind, in many Texts, tho not the *whole* of it; but if we *mistake*, so far as we mistake, we perceive it not at all. So that you your self have condemned the famous Proposition above-mention'd; and we may be satisfied, that *Sincerity in Error*, even the most *superlative* Sincerity that *erroneous* Persons can have, is *no part* of our Righteousness. Nor will you I hope, after this, soberly suppose, or say it is.

"But, understanding by Happiness, strictly speaking, the Christian Salvation, the Righteousness which qualifies us for the heavenly State, &c." Is not the Happiness, which the Subjects of Divine Favour at the last Day, shall be possessed of, eternal Happiness? Is there any other eternal Happiness either *strictly* or *largely* speaking, but the Christian Salvation? Are any saved but *in, thro' and by Christ*; and is not the Salvation which he gives, a *common* Salvation? This shews, however, that you intended the former Answer should comprehend all Men every where; so that I did not in this mistake you. But you undertook to shew what was *that Righteousness which will render Men the proper Subjects of the Favour of God at last*; which differs, I conceive, exceedingly from that which qualifies us for the heavenly State. If you intend the same Thing, the first or last of these Expressions is very improper. I shall not willingly misrepresent you. If you mean, that a *sincere Compliance* with the Will of God, is *that* Righteousness, which is the meritorious Ground and Cause of the Divine Acceptance at the Day of Judgment; it is a most dangerous Error, contrary to the whole Gospel, and indeed *eversive* of it: for, if Righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain*. If you mean any thing less, it comes not, I think, up to your Purpose. As to the other Phrase, I grant we must be qualified for Heaven, before we can get into it, for no unclean Thing can enter into the New Jerusalem†. But Thanks be to him, which maketh us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, Col. 1. 12. Glory to him that washeth us from our Sins in his own Blood, Rev. 1. 5. and let the blessed Spirit be praised, who renews and sanctifies us, and leads us unto the

* Gal. 2. 21. † Rev. 21. 27.

ways of Truth and Holiness, 2 Theff. 2. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 1 John 2. 27. *These* give us a *Meetness* for Heaven, and *qualify* us for the Happiness there, but it is *the Righteousness* of Christ alone, that gives a *Claim* and *Title* to it, Tit. 3. 7. and renders us the proper Subjects of Divine Favour, both in this Life and in *that* which is to come.

I am at a Loss to understand what you mean by "the Principle on which Men are denominated righteous." I have granted, that Believers are *denominated Righteous*, from their *inherent, personal Righteousness*. But then, I must say that all such are righteous, *made* and *declared* so in their Justification, *when God imputeth Righteousness to them without Works*, Rom. 4. 6. and, that their *personal Righteousness*, even in the most holy, pious, and diligent of all the Saints, is not *that Righteousness* in which they *dare venture to appear* before God, Psal. 143. 2. It is not the *meritorious Cause* of their Justification in *this Life*, no nor the *Ground and Foundation* of the solemn and publick Declaration of our Justification at *the last Day*. No Man is ever in the Bible, said to be *righteous* before God, but the *justified*. So that whatever you mean by a *Principle*; our *Fidelity* is neither *the chief*, nor *the only one*, on which we are *denominated Righteous*. Remember also that *Children* have no *actual Righteousness* of their own; and yet as many of *them* as are *saved* must be *righteous*. You conclude this Paragraph thus, "and his Sincerity in acting up to his Light" in his habitual Course, is his Righteousness, referring to "Acts 10. 1, 2." But how that Text, could either illustrate or prove that Sentence, or answer your End, I shall leave it to you to shew. Cornelius was one of the *ποσέβητοι*, Jewish *Profelytes*, and might be well acquainted with all the Word of God, that was *then written*, for any thing that appears to me to the contrary.

"That God doth accept of this, say you, and is ready to pardon all those Failures which are consistent with Uprightness, &c. is the effect of his rich Mercy and Grace, in and thro' Jesus Christ." It seems then that *the Righteousness* of Christ has no place in our *Justification at all*; but *our own Righteousness* is accepted, and we are *pardoned* thro' the Mercy of God in Christ. Your Discourse upon this Head seems to me, to be nothing but mere Confusion. Accept it; for what? For *that Righteousness* upon the account of which we are justified and saved? No; for you tell us below, "that where no Man can be accounted Righteous, but by the interposition of Mercy, his Justification is owing to Grace." But when we are *declared Righteous*, whether

whether are we accounted perfectly righteous, or only imperfectly? If imperfectly; then we are not justified, in the Gospel sense of that word; we cannot have Peace with God*; we are not washed from our Sins in the Blood of Christ †, &c. If perfectly; I ask how this can be? For surely such a Righteousness as ours, even with the Interposition of Mercy (which can make no Man righteous) is not a sufficient Ground for our perfect Justification. If God declares any perfectly Righteous, they are perfectly Righteous, or he declares what is not. Besides all that you allow Mercy to do, is to "deliver us from the just Punishment of our Offences." But delivering from Punishment is one thing, and declaring Righteous another: And God doth both in our Justification. He accounts us perfectly Righteous, upon the account of the perfect Righteousness of Christ, which he graciously imputes to Believers; he delivers us from the Curse, because Christ was made a Curse for us: Thus Believers are made righteous, pardoned, and delivered too. Furthermore, "if Mercy interposeth, and Justification is of Grace;" then Mercy and Grace is the Cause and Ground of our Justification, and not our Fidelity. Yea, if this be so; then Faith and Obedience are no other than Duties or Qualifications in them that are to be saved, but not the Cause of their Acceptance. You seem to own this, in these words, "Mercy alone can deliver us from the just Punishment of our Offences." If Mercy alone can do this, our Sincerity, I think has no part in it. And yet, even this, appears to be another Mistake. We have Redemption thro' Christ's Blood, Eph. 1. 7. who was delivered for our Offences, Rom. 4. 25. By his Stripes we are healed, Isa. 53. 5. And therefore, As Abundance of Grace, and the Gift of Righteousness which Believers receive, concur to their being made Righteous, Rom. 5. 17—20. So Mercy and Justice both concur in their Deliverance from Punishment. To be short, I take the whole of this matter thus. In Justification there is an Imputation of Righteousness, for which we are declared Righteous, and the justified have a Claim to the Inheritance; and Pardon, or Absolution from Guilt and Punishment, whereby they are delivered from Hell and Misery. With respect to the first, the Obedience of Christ is the matter of our Righteousness; it is rich Mercy that provides such a Righteousness; there is a mixture of pure Mercy to the Elect, and Justice to the Surety in imputing it to them for whose

* Rom. 5. 1. † Rev. 1. 5.

take it was brought in* ; but supposing it to be imputed, our being declared righteous, is an *Act of Justice*. With respect to the last, it was *free and sovereign Mercy* that God accepted a *vicarious Punishment* ; it is *rich Grace* in our dear Redeemer that he condescended to bear our Sins †, and make Satisfaction for us ; it is of *free Mercy*, without any thing in us, that our Sins are pardoned, and that we are delivered from Misery who so richly deserved it ; but it is an *Act of Justice* in God, and a *Debt due* to the Mediator, to absolve those for whom he died, even all his living Members ; and that they should never again suffer, that which he suffered for them. So that *Justification* is an *Act of God's free Grace to the Sinner*, considered in himself ; tho, upon the Supposition of a *preceding Compact* with the Redeemer, it is an *Act of Justice* done to him, that all his Members should be justified. This sweet, refreshing Truth, runs thro' the whole New Testament, and is the express Doctrine of the great Apostle. Rom. 3. 24—27. *Being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ : whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, thro' the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his Righteousness ; that he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* So that the *Justice of God*, which is the *Sinner's greatest Enemy*, is now become the *Believer's greatest Friend*. Here is Consolation for all that are in Christ !

“ But, say you, the Objects of God's justifying Act at the “ great Day, are only the sincere and faithful, or Men “ whose Works have been Good and Right.” Shall we find nothing properly and truly expressed ? If my Memory fail me not, there is no such Expression in the Bible, as God's justifying any at the great Day ; nor is there any mention in that Book of two Justifications, or of Believers being justified twice. They are justified in this Life by Faith, Rom. 5. 1. The *absolatory Sentence* which shall be past at the last Day, will not be a new Justification, but rather a *solemn Publication* of that Sentence which past in Favour of the Elect upon their believing, according to the Fruits and Effects of their Faith in Christ. Your meaning, however, in the words, is easily perceived, and it is generally true ; but you should not have said the *only* Objects : for, besides Children, what do you think of the Thief upon

* Dan. 9. 24. † Isa. 53. 11. ‡ Pet. 2. 24.

the Cross, and many I hope, to whom God has given Mercy in Christ, in old Age, and on a Death-Bed, at the last hour, whose Works have been far from being *good and right*, at least till their last Moments. Surely *the Righteousness of Christ* can give, *even such*, a Title; and *the Sanctification of the Spirit*, may qualify *even them* for the heavenly State.

What follows in this and the next Page is true, but several things in them evidently destroy your own Cause. It is true, that "the good Seed are styled the Children of the Kingdom, for having received and improved the good Seed. It is also granted, that the Reason why the good Seed sprung up, in one sort of Ground, and not in the rest, is resolved into honesty of Heart, *Luke 8. 15.*" Our Lord's Design in *that Parable* was, to shew the *different Success* of the Word, upon *different Hearers*; and in *this*, the *different Nature, Fruits, and End*, of *the good Seed* and of the *Tares*; But not to tell us what *this Honesty of Heart* is, or whence some have *that* which others have not. You say rightly, "that they first hear the Word, and then understand it, or else they hear they know not what." Had you ruminated a little on these words, they would have stopt your Career. The *honest Heart* understands the Word, *i. e. knows the true sense and meaning of it*; or he doth not understand the Word, and *bears he knows not what*. Yea, a few Lines below, you tell us, "on the other Hand, they that did not bring forth Fruit, are said not to *understand it*, *ver. 19.* where not understanding the word, cannot signify not knowing it, but not *mind-ing it*." Well then the honest Heart is the sincere Heart; the honest or sincere Hearer *understands* the Word, *cannot but know it*; to *know it*, is to *perceive its true Sense and Import*: He then that doth not know the true Sense, (which none do that misapprehend it) is not, cannot be sincere either in Faith or Practice, that is, cannot have Honesty of Heart. All that I plead is, that the *sincere* may certainly *perceive all necessary Truths*, all *the Essentials* of Christianity in some measure, and sufficiently for Faith and Holiness: But you assure us of a great deal more. Where then is the *Innocence* of Error? What becomes of *Sincerity* in *mistaking* the true Sense of the Word? Yea, what becomes of *your Sermon*? So perish all such Attempts.

"The honest Heart has Constancy to endure the Fatigue and Trouble of rooting out ill Dispositions, and planting good ones in their Room." It is true, *they that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts*, Gal. 4. 24. But none do these things till they are Christ's, nor can they be done but *thro' his Spirit*, Rom. 8. 13.

What I want to know here is, *whence is this Honesty?* Is it natural, or may it be had, acquired, or obtained by this Fatigue and Trouble? *Can these things be done till the Heart is made honest?* Blessed be the Lord for these glorious Promises, *a new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, &c.* Ezek. 36. 26, 27. When God fulfils these Promises, *the Strength and Power* of all *ill* Dispositions are *broken*, and all *good ones* are *planted*. Then and not before is the Heart made honest: And *the Holy Spirit* in the Course of our Sanctification, *enables* us more and more to *mortify* the first sort, and to *strengthen* and *improve* the last. Scripture Phrases best suit Scripture Subjects.

"The Enemy no doubt watched the honest Heart, to steal away the Word, but he held it fast, and so the Tares would not prosper there." You should have said, the honest Heart *received not the Tares*, and they could not prosper *where they were not*. "If Men are condemned for their wilful Omissions, there can be no doubt but their actual Offences will be brought to account: *For we must all appear, &c.* But then, by the things done in the Body, the Apostle doth not mean only things done by the bodily Members, but comprehends the inward Thoughts and Counsels of the Heart." Very exact! Are not all wilful Omissions *actual* Offences? Shall not all Omissions be brought to account? The Law curseth every one *that continueth not in all things written in it to do them*, Gal. 3. 10. Was there any need of that learned Explication of such easy words, *things done in his Body*? Or could any Man mistake the Sense of them? I think not, till you *explained* them. Every body knows that the Prepositions *in* and *by* are not the same. The obvious Sense is, things done *in this Life*, our state of Probation, while Men *within the Body*, before the Soul was separated from it *by Death*, whether they were done by the bodily Members, or were more intellectual Acts.

You next inform us, "in the best way to find what that Righteousness is which God requires and will accept, even by reading the New Testament it self, especially the Gospels, and in particular that most Divine Sermon of our Saviour, *Mat. 5.*" These words appear to me very offensive. We know from whom you have learned *this* Divinity. Why *the New Testament it self*, rather than the *Old*; since they are *both* the Rule of Righteousness? Why *the Gospels especially*, rather than *the Epistles*? Have they
not

not all *the same Authority*? Were they not all written by *Inspiration of the same Spirit*, and for *the same End*? Is not all Scripture *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*? 2 Tim. 3. 16. If you should say, that tho they are all of *equal Authority*; yet *the Rule, or Means of Righteousness are more fully, clearly, or more frequently revealed in the Gospels, than in the Epistles*: I confess I think *this* a mistake, and that all the *Duties of Obedience, as well as Articles of our Faith, are as fully, clearly, and frequently revealed in the Epistles, as in the Gospels*; if not more so. But I love not to make Comparisons. The *Rule and Means of Righteousness are plainly, distinctly, and copiously revealed in them all*. Why that *most divine Sermon, rather than the rest*? All our Lord's Sermons are *most Divine*; and it is great Presumption in you, to pretend to tell us, that *one* of them, or *which* of them is *more divine* than another. Besides in the Chapter referred to, there are but few if any of *the Articles of our Faith*; we find no *new Rules, no Laws* in it but those which had been given long before by *Moses, and the Prophets*; only, that they are *vindicated* from the wicked glosses of the Scribes. Withal, *some only* of the Commands are there explained; there appears little or nothing that is express or particular, relating to the *first, second, fourth, fifth and eighth* Commandments; nor did Christ design *this* Chapter for a *perfect Rule* of all acceptable Obedience.

"Which Rules, say you, if put in Practice we shall find attended with a sweet Serenity, and feel in our selves a lively Hope of Immortality." Yes, if we could obey them *perfectly*, they might have these Effects: for *the Man that doth them, shall live in them*, Gal. 3. 12. I grant that the Consciences of the sober, may *partially* excuse, even in the midst of many *visible* Infirmities: But how the *most sincere* Obeyer of *these* Laws, or the *whole Law*, who is conscious to himself of *many Sins, much latent Hypocrisy and Imperfection*, can have such *perfect* Peace, and feel in himself such a *lively Hope* of a blessed Immortality, without *some other Ground* of Peace and Hope; you have not said, or can say. Peace is the Fruit of *Justification by Faith in Christ*, Rom. 5. 1. *who is our Peace*, Eph. 2. 14. None then can have *true Peace* but *the justified*: The more clear the *Sense and Evidence* of our Justification is, *the more* is our Peace. Nor can any have *true Peace*, but in the way of *Faith, receiving and applying Christ, as he is made of God unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*. Christ in Believers is the Hope of Glory,

Col. 1. 27. The most *sincere* among the Gentiles, *who were without Christ, were also without Hope in the World*, Eph. 2. 12. What Christ doth for his People, and in them, is the *only Foundation* of their Hope of Happiness. But before we leave this Chapter, I remember it has been often said by the primitive *Fathers*, that *the very first Words of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, did at once put all the good Works of the Pagan Philosophers and Heroes out of Countenance* : and some have questioned whether *there ever was an active Heretick, from the beginning of the World to this Day, to whom they can agree.*

" The Obedience of Christ, even unto Death, as being
 " sent to make Reconciliation with God for Sinners, and as
 " confirming the new Covenant, in which God tenders his
 " saving Mercies to the upright and sincere, is foreign to the
 " present Subject : For his Death being a common Benefit,
 " in as much as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the
 " Sins of the World, hath tasted Death for every Man, the
 " Business of the great Day is not to enquire for whom
 " Christ died, but who are obedient Subjects of his King-
 " dom." The *Righteousness of Christ*, (it seems) is *foreign to the Subject*, when the Inquiry is, what is *that Righteousness* which will render Men the *proper Subjects* of divine Favour, at the last Day ; and it should have had no place here, had it not been to *prove that it is so*. This is bravely spoken ; like a Christian, and like a Protestant ! I shall however, venture to say, and undertake to make it good, that it is not near *so foreign*, as *forty things* besides, which you have in your Sermon. We may allow, that our Lord did not in this Parable, intend *directly* to teach us the *Influence* of his Obedience and Death, unto Salvation ; but *cannot think it so foreign* to the present Subject : since none can be *Children of the Kingdom, Heirs of the Inheritance*, be declared or accounted righteous, or have a *Righteousness* that God will accept, or will render us the *Subjects* of his Favour, *without it*. Christ's Obedience unto Death is a common Benefit, you mean to *all and every one*, as is evident from your *Design*, and the *Texts* quoted. But of all the Passages brought by the *Universalists* to prove *this*, these, I think, are the most improper, and do them least Service. The first is, *John 1. 29. The Lamb of God which taketh away the Sins of the World*. The meaning of the word *World* may be learnt from the Parable ; People of all Nations, Kindreds, Tongues, &c. as *contradistinguished* from the *Jews* ; and not every individual all over the Earth.

Earth. In what Sense, or with what Truth, can it be said, that Christ *takes away those Sins which remain*, and *shall remain* upon the greater part of the World for ever; and which *were never taken away*, neither the Guilt, Pollution, nor Power of them, nor ever shall be? If Christ did indeed *take them away*; how, and why do they yet remain? Is it true in any Sense, that Christ *took away the Sins* of those, who had been in Hell some Thousands of Years before his Death; or that he *died for Judas*? The other Text is, *Heb. 2. 9. Jesus tasted Death for all, ὑπὲρ πάντων, in the stead of all.* You know, that *universal Propositions* are to be interpreted by the *Scope* of the Place, and the *Subject Matter*, and that this Rule holds good even in common Conversation. Now the *Persons* (or *Subjects*) spoken of in that Context are only *the many Sons*, ver. 10, 13. *his Brethren*, ver. 11, 17. *the Church*, ver. 12. *the Children*, ver. 14. Besides, here is an Adjective without a Substantive, which therefore cannot by any Rule of Speech be extended to any but the Substantives to which it visibly relates. Withal, the *Phrase* it self compelleth us to *this Interpretation*, and to limit the Proposition to those only. For, if he *tasted Death, ὑπὲρ in the stead*, and room of every Man; it was that *they* should not *taste* it themselves: but *many* of the Sons of Men shall *taste Death* (all that is called Death) themselves; therefore he did not *taste* it for them. Will the *Justice* of God permit him, to receive a *double Payment* of the *same Debt*; inflict a *double Punishment* for the *same Crimes*; exact Satisfaction of the *Surety* and the *Criminals* too? What *Recompence* can be made to the Redeemer for his *tasting Death* in their stead, who shall *taste* it for ever? Was it possible he should *die in the Place*, and for the *eternal Benefit* of those who shall *die* notwithstanding, and receive *no eternal Benefit* by it? He doth not, will not *intercede* for all, *John 17. 9.* therefore surely he did not *taste Death* for them, for he that doth the *greater*, will do the *lesser*. Is his *tasting Death* sufficient for the *Salvation* of all, *without his Intercession*? If it is: of *what use* is his *Intercession* for others; is it not needless? If it is not sufficient; of *what Service* is it to those for whom he *interceeds not*, that he *tasted Death* for them? Can any get safely thro' without his *Intercession*? Is not Christ's *Intercession* with the Father, as *prevalent* for one, as for another? And had he *tasted Death* for the *most obstinate*; could he not make even *them willing in a Day* of his *Power*? You say, he was sent

* Psal. 110. 3.

“ to make Reconciliation with God for Sinners, that is, all “ Sinners.” He most certainly *did* what he was sent for. And is God *indeed reconciled* to all Men; (for to make Reconciliation is to reconcile) whence then is it, that the greatest part of the World never heard of *the Ministry, or means of Reconciliation*? Whence is it, that so many feel *the Effects* of his everlasting Wrath? I grant that our Lord’s Death was “ the Confirmation of the new Covenant;” but desire you to explain what you mean by these words, “ in which God tenders his saving Mercies to the upright “ and sincere.” I want to know what you intend by *Integrity and Sincerity*; whether it is *natural*; and if so, whether to *all*, or to *some only*; or whether it may be *acquired* by us; whether it is of *our selves* that some are sincere, others not; or whether it is *God that makes the Difference* *? Especially, whether God tenders his saving Mercies to any *before* they are sincere, which your words seem to hint he does not? If he does not indeed, you will find it hard to prove, that ever he tendered his saving Mercies to any Man in the World, unless you’ll mean by *sincere*, the *awakened, convinced* Sinner only.

But however darkly you express your self upon this Head, you are very clear and very positive in the following Maxim. “ The Business of the great Day is not to enquire for whom “ Christ died, but who are the obedient Subjects of his “ Kingdom.” What Proof have you for this? These two Inquiries are not surely opposite or inconsistent. What if *both these* are part of the Business of the great Day? The Scripture, I think, has assured us they are, whatever you say to the contrary. Rev. 20. 12. *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the Books were opened: and another Book, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the Books, according to their Works.* And it is said expressly, Rev. 21. 27. *None shall enter into the new Jerusalem, but they that are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.* That which kept some from worshipping the Beast, when the whole World wondered after him, was, that their Names were written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, ch. 13. 8. and ch. 17. 8. Now whatever is written in *this Book*, certainly the Names of those for whom Christ died, according to God’s Decree of Election, are written in it: Nor can we conceive why it should be opened at that Day, but for this purpose,

* 1 Cor. 4. 7.

that it may be known for *whom Christ died*, and who were preserved by his Death. Our Lord is very particular in several places, in telling us of *his Sheep, who were given to him, whom he calleth by Name, for whom he should lay down his Life*; assuring us, *that they hear his Voice, that he gives unto them eternal Life, that they shall never perish*, &c. *John* 10. 3, 11, 14, 27, 28. That, *this is the Father's Will which hath sent him, that of all which he hath given him, he should lose nothing*, &c. *John* 6. 39. The great and chief Shepherd, is to give an Account of *his Sheep* at the last Day, to the Father from whom he received them: And therefore is *this Book to be opened*, that the Names of the *Elect* being known, it may be seen, whether the Shepherd can give a faithful Account of them, or whether any of them be lost; whether he died for them, and whether his Death hath been *their Life*? Or we may consider it thus; *the Book of Life*, [which contains not only the Persons elected, but the end to which, viz. Salvation; and the means thro' and by which, viz. Christ, his Righteousness, Death, Ascension, Intercession, Faith, Repentance, &c. which conduce to that End] will be opened, that all these may be considered together; and that it may be known, that tho there is a necessary Connection betwixt good Works and Happiness *, and that the Judge will give to every one according to his Works †; yet the Interposition of Christ, was the Spring and Source of all the acceptable Obedience of the Saints; that their Reward will be a Reward of Grace, and not of Debt; and that the Inheritance which shall be graciously adjudged to them, is the Fruit and Purchase of the Righteousness and Death of Christ. Besides, if we should suppose, that in the Process of that Day, Believers shall be brought to a Trial for all that is past; the Righteousness and Death of Christ, will be their Plea, why Sentence should not pass against them for their Sins: and therefore the Inquiry must be made for whom Christ died, and this Book opened for that Purpose. Furthermore, the dead, small and great, are to be judged, i. e. if I am not mistaken, not only Persons of all Ranks, Qualities and Conditions; but Young and Old. Now as many of the young (Infants) as are saved; are saved in, by, and thro' Christ: and this Book will be the chief, if not the only Book, that will be opened for them. Much more might be offered on this Subject, but I forbear.

* Heb. 12. 14. † Rev. 22. 12.

Only this appears plain, that the Decree of Election, the Righteousness and Death of Christ, and *the Fruits of them* all appearing in the Faith and Obedience of the Saints, shall be *considered together* at the Day of Judgment. And I am satisfied, that none who *truly* believe, will thank you for this *groundless* and *discouraging* Saying, " the Business of " the great Day is not to enquire for whom Christ died." And now follows your formidable Objection, and much more formidable Answer.

Object. ' *But it may be objected, that there are certain*
 ' *Propositions or Truths, so necessary to be believed, that no*
 ' *internal Quality, nor any good Life, will secure a Man*
 ' *from Damnation, unless he assents to them; particularly,*
 ' *a right Faith in the much controverted Doctrine of the Tri-*
 ' *nity, is insisted on as a Matter of that Importance.*— I
 ' should not mingle any Thing of this Nature with a practi-
 ' cal Discourse, were it not to silence the uncharitable Cla-
 ' mours of a certain Set of Men, who, at best, are very doubt-
 ' ful whether any Body can be saved, who in this Matter is
 ' not of their Principles.

Ans^r. ' To this Objection I answer, that a right Faith in
 ' this, and every other Doctrine, as far as it is delivered by
 ' Christ and his Apostles, is necessary to all Men who can
 ' perceive, and have Opportunity to know it. For a wilful
 ' Denial of our Assent to what God hath taught us, when we
 ' have competent Means and Opportunity to know it, is a
 ' damnable Sin; and I think it is agreed on all Hands, that
 ' it exposes a Person to the greatest Danger, not to enquire
 ' impartially what is the Mind and Will of God, that he may
 ' believe and do it. The sincere Enquirer reverences his
 ' Maker, and, by the very Act, pays Homage to him;
 ' whereas wilful Omission is the greatest Contempt of him.
 ' But, as I have observed before, the Measure of Obligation,
 ' and the Necessity of particular Truths to be believed,
 ' entirely depends upon the Person's Capacity. Where there-
 ' fore the Capacity is wanting, the Obligation never com-
 ' mences; it being impossible that any Obligation should
 ' reach a Man's Conscience, but as it comes into the Under-
 ' standing first, and informs his Judgment: And therefore,
 ' wherever the meaning of Words cannot be perceived whe-
 ' ther it be in Relation to Doctrine or Practice, neither the
 ' Peremptoriness of the Threatning, nor the Universality of
 ' the expression, can be of any Force. The contrary Suppo-
 ' sition makes the great Judge of the World to conduct him-
 ' self, even in that solemn Work, not by his unerring Judg-
 ' ment

ment of what is fit and right, but by arbitrary Will and Pleasure; which, if it be supposed to be the Rule of the divine Proceedings, removes all the natural Differences between Good and Evil. And, if the Ideas of right and fit are so very different in God from what they are in Man, and what appears to us unjust in Cases so obvious to human Reason, is the contrary in his Mind, I would desire every Man to ask his own Conscience, whether he can be secure of the Meaning of God in any Part of the Revelation. This is very evident, because on this Supposition the Idea of *Elect* may be quite contrary in the divine Mind to what it is in ours, the *Cursed* may be the *Blessed*, and even *eternal Life everlasting Misery*. For tho' these Words, in the common Usage of Men, have such an agreed and determinate Signification, yet since upon the present Principle of sovereign Pleasure, they may be used *arbitrarily*, who can tell in any Case, that God hath not done so? The only Security we have against this is, that it is altogether absurd, that a perfectly wise and good Being, whose Self-sufficiency sets him above all possible Temptation, should ever act in Contradiction to his own Perception of what is fit and right. And here I am sure, that I have all good Men on my side; because all good Men abhor the imputing of Unrighteousness to their Maker, which the present Objection supposes.

It by no means follows from what has been said, that all Religions are upon a Level, or that the Christian Religion doth not bring the greatest Advantages, for promoting our future Happiness. But the mere passive Light, or the Doctrine assented to, has no such Effect, but as the Mind is operative with it, and forms its Temper and Conduct by it.

I would not be understood by any Thing here said, as granting that our deceased Friend had a wrong Notion of the Trinity: But if he had, considering the great Variety of Apprehensions, the perpetual Wranglings, and disagreeing Sentiments of those who claim to themselves the Title of Orthodox Divines, it might be excusable in a Layman, to have a confused, and, in some Respects, a false Conception of it. But, after all, it is very plain, that his Opinion *that the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who is the only Principle and Origin of all Being, and from whom the Son himself derives whatever he is, and whatever Power he possesses, *is*, absolutely speaking, *the only true God*, perfectly agrees with the Scripture Declaration, the Reason of Things, and the Testimony of the primitive Church.

Church. Men may invent as many particular Schemes as they please, and call them fundamental, but, if St. Paul had a right Notion of this Matter, it is sufficient to constitute a Person a Member of Christ's Body, and to qualify him for eternal Salvation, to believe that there is *one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all* † : For when he is industriously setting down the Arguments to persuade Men to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, he mentions nothing further as absolutely necessary to all Christians. He doth not indeed particularize every Thing that is spoken in the Scripture of the Son and Spirit, and may be perfective of our Faith; and therefore requisite to be believed by them who discern it; but what in Reference to these constitutes the Body of Christ. But then he takes great care to inculcate, *that the Father is above all.*

And now, having, as I think, fully answered the Objection, and shewn what it is that the Scripture makes necessary to be believed, and indeed is actually believed by all Christians; I shall conclude this Head with observing, that the Apostle places *Heresies* amongst the Works of the Flesh *, and couples Faith with a good Conscience †. For a good Man will believe what he can because he is conscientious; and, if his Heart doth not reproach him with wilful Neglect, his Ignorance of what he had not Ability to know, will not be charged on him as a Crime. Accordingly, in another Place the Apostle joins *Unbelief* with an *evil Heart* **, and calls him only an *Heretick* who is *self-condemned* ††. Which clearly proves, that Sincerity is that Righteousness which will render Men the proper Subjects of Divine Favour, when God shall judge the World by Jesus Christ.

I have proposed your Objection and Answer at large, that you may not complain of unfair Treatment; and that the Reader may carefully compare them together. Let us consider them as they lie.

The Objection is not *fairly* proposed, but couched in words that may deceive the Simple. The *Objectors* are far from thinking, that there can be any internal Quality, or any Life *truly good*, and *acceptable* to God, without *Faith, a right Faith*, in all *necessary* Truths, and such as

† Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6. * Gal. v. 20.
** Heb. iii. 12. † Tit. iii. 10, 11.

† 1 Tim. i. 5, 19.

are essential to Christianity. They readily acknowledge, that Men who neither know, nor believe those Truths, may be civil, and upright in their Dealings with Men; yea, may be in all appearance more blameless in their Conversations, than some of those *who say they do*. But your Discourse plainly supposes, that they may have *such internal Qualities*, and *such good Lives* as may be their Righteousness, and render them the proper Subjects of Divine Favour, *when God shall judge the World by Jesus Christ*. This they all deny; being persuaded that none but true Believers can have *such internal Qualities* and *good Lives*. And I think I have sufficiently proved, in my Sermon, and in these Remarks, from *plain, express* Scripture Texts, that there can be no Holiness without Faith, the *Faith of God's Elect*: that *the belief of the Truth*, is not only the *only Rule*, and *the only means* of Sanctification; but an *essential Ingredient* in that Obedience, which God requires and will accept.

The Objection supposeth, that there are *certain Truths* so necessary to be believed, that there is *no Salvation* for adult Persons, who have the Bible, without the *Speculative as well as Practical Belief* of them. This has been the constant Faith of the *Christian Church* in all Ages. Nor did I ever hear of any Denomination of Men bearing the Christian Name, who denied it. Nor can I think that any Man who reads the Scriptures, and believes them too, can *possibly* be brought *sincerely* to doubt of it. There are several such Truths in the Bible; I will offer a few, the *ignorance or denial* of which excludes from Salvation. Our Lord, in so many words, tells the *Jews*, John 8. 24. *If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your Sins*. Can any thing be more express? Those that doubt of or deny this, *make our Lord a Liar*. He is also very particular, John 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God*. This evidently supposeth the *Necessity* of believing some Truths. The *Denial of the Resurrection of Christ*, certainly exposes to Damnation; for so saith the Apostle expressly, 1 Cor. 15. 17. *And if Christ be not raised, your Faith is vain; ye are yet in your Sins*. And therefore is the Belief of it absolutely necessary. The *Doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead*, is another; for the Apostle in so many words assures us, that *Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the Truth had erred, saying that the Resurrection is past already, had overthrown the Faith of some*, 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18. But there is no security from Damnation, when our Faith is overthrown, for *we are saved thro' Faith*, Eph. 2. 8. That

Opinion which taught that *the Observation of the Jewish Law was necessary to Salvation*, and a Compliance with it is of the same kind, most surely inferring Damnation, if we may believe the Apostle, Gal. 5. 2. *Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.* If Christ did profit them nothing, they could not possibly be saved; for, *there is no Salvation in any other, &c. Acts 4. 12.* Yea, *the Galatians observing Days, and Months, and Times, and Years, made him afraid, lest he had bestowed upon them Labour in vain, ch. 4. 10, 11.* This is the more considerable, because the Observation of the Law seem'd to have little or no *moral or intrinsick* evil in it; it was at most *but being righteous over much*, which some honest People might think was the safest Extreme; the Law was *God's own Law*, therefore they thought it their *Duty* to observe it, and might suppose that *if they held fast to Christ*, there could be no danger to do the other also. But all this, and a great deal more, did not make it lawful, or safe; so far from it, that the Observation of it shut them out from Christ, and consequently from Heaven.

This last Instance, tho it is no Dispute with us now, and so may not seem so apposite, as indeed it is not in every Circumstance; yet it is sufficient to my Purpose, to shew that *some Opinions, even such as may appear to have no moral Evil* in them, are *certainly damning*: and that those that *would be saved* must give up such Opinions.

These are some of the Truths which are necessary, and without an Assent to which none can have any internal Qualities, or good Lives, at least such as may be their Righteousness; no, nor any true saving Faith; nor, consequently can be saved. Let it be still kept in mind, that these are not *Scripture Consequences*, but express *Scripture Assertions*; yea, *solemn Declarations*. I suppose I need add no more. The Truth is, all doubts of this Kind are more becoming *Deists* than Men who call them *Christians*. Nor can I see any End can be answered by them, if it is not to make all Faith *ambulatory or precarious*, to shake and loosen *all the Foundations*, and make all *Belief* a very *useless, empty* Thing, of little or no moment to the Souls of Men; and what an *excellent Motive* this is to a *sincere* Inquiry after Truth, I shall leave you to judge. But if any *Scruples* remain, consider how expressly *Faith* is required in many Places; what a Stress there is laid upon it; what Promises are made to it; and how necessary it is declared. Would God give a *Revelation* of himself, of what he would have

us believe and know, how he is to be worshipped, &c. without any *Design* that it should be *minded*; or to leave it a *matter of indifference* whether we receive, believe and know it, or not? It seems to me obvious, that if there is no danger of a Mistake, if it be so light a matter to have right or wrong Conceptions of these things, if we might be holy and accepted either way, the Revelation of them was vain and unnecessary. And shall we be so *Atheistical*, as to impeach the *Wisdom, Goodness, and Love* of God in revealing them, and that in such a manner; or arraign his *Faithfulness* in so positively declaring there is great Danger, where there is little or none? God forbid! But I pass this unpleasant, ungrateful Subject, when I have observed, that when *FAITH* is gone, *HOPE* will go with it: and therefore when Men have renounced that, they will soon become willing to give up this.

The *Doctrine of the Trinity* is also supposed to be a matter of this Importance. If what is said in the former Paragraph be true, I can hardly see how this can be denied. This Doctrine is the *Foundation* of all revealed Religion; the chief *Characteristick* which distinguisheth Christianity from all others; it runs quite thro' it; and according as our Belief of this is right or wrong, so will it be in most other Points of Faith: It therefore must have a mighty Influence upon all the Acts of our Faith, Worship, and Obedience; yea, without some true Knowledge of it (as to the Substance of the Doctrine) there are few, if any Passages in the Word of God, immediately relating to the Faith, Hope, Holiness, Establishment, and Joy of Believers, can be rightly understood. The Object of our Trust, Faith, Love, Worship and Obedience, as well as the Rule, Manner, and Extent of these, are so nearly concerned in, so closely interwoven with this Doctrine, that if the Belief of any be necessary, this must be it. That the *Doctrine of the Trinity* is of the last Importance appears also to me, from express Scripture Declarations. Our Lord tells us in so many words, John 17. 3. *And this is Life Eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,* *ὅτι τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεόν.* Now whether the exclusive Particle *only*, limits the Subject *thee*, so that the words run thus, *to know thee only to be the true God, thee alone,* or *thee to be the true God only*, which the order of the words will very hardly permit: or the Predicate, *the true God*, so that the words be, *to know thee the only*, or *who art the only true God*, which the words naturally lead us to; (for these two Readings, *thee alone*, or *thee only to be* the

the true God, and thee the only true God, are far from being the same ; the first excluding all but the Father from being true God, the other not) whether of these, I say, or whatever be the Sense, it is evident, that a *right Knowledge* of these two Divine Persons, is *absolutely necessary* to eternal Life : it is eternal Life to know them. This same Apostle tells us expressly, that he wrote his Gospel, that *ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God*, and that *believing ye might have Life thro' his Name*, John 21. 31. So that our Life depends upon our believing *this* : not merely assenting to these words, *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, (I presume) but to that which is signified by them. Therefore not only the *Denial*, but *Ignorance* of *this* Faith excludes from Life. We can't think that these Phrases are synonymous, without imputing a sort of a *Tautology* to the Apostle, which is very unworthy of him ; for then they would run thus, that *Jesus is the Christ, the Christ* : But the first denotes his Office, the last his Nature, which the words necessarily signify. The Design of that Gospel was not to prove that *Jesus was the Messiah* that was to come ; the antient *Hereticks*, *Ebion*, *Cerintbus*, &c. denied not this : But his *Divinity* (if we may believe the concurring Testimony of Antiquity) and *Incarnation*, that he was *the Son, the begotten, the only begotten Son of God* ; therefore *equal with him* in Nature and Perfections, *essentially God* ; who by assuming our Nature, *being made Flesh*, John 1. 14. became *well qualified* to be the *Messiah*, and *Saviour* of Men. It can hardly be imagined that any of them denied that Jesus was *called the Son of God*, seeing this is so frequently declared ; or that he was *his Son* in *some Sense* or *other* : but that they denied the *known* Sense of that Title, that he was *so his Son, as to be begotten* ; yea, *the only begotten* of his Father, John 3. 18. *To be in the Father, and the Father in him*, ch. 10. 38. *to be one with him*, ver. 30. *equal with him*, ch. 5. 17, 18. *to do all that he does*, ver. 19. *to have all that he has*, ch. 16. 15. *that he knows the Father, as well as the Father knows him*, ch. 10. 15. *that he hath Life in himself*, by being the only begotten Son, *even as the Father hath Life in himself*, ch. 5. 26. *that he is to be honoured even as the Father*, ver. 23. in a word, *so the Son, as to be God, God from Eternity, the Creator of all Things*, ch. 1. 1—3. *the true God, and eternal Life*, as it is 1 John 5. 20. To confute these *Hereticks* who denied all this, and to confirm *the Faith* of the Church, in this great Article of the *Divinity* of her Saviour, was *this* Gospel written : and we see how *fully, clearly, and strongly*

this

this Apostle proves *his Point*. It is impossible to say any thing more in words. How wisely doth he keep up that *Eminence* that is proper to *the Father, as Father, and supreme* in the Dispensation of Grace ; preserve the *just Dignity, and essential Equality of the Son*, even when he considers him as *economically inferior* ; and *emphatically* expresses their *essential Unity, personal Distinctions, and the voluntary Condescension of the Son* in the Work of Redemption ? The Apostle Paul tells us, *that another Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. 3. 11. Christ is the Foundation, therefore Errors about him must needs be *destructive*. The *Trinitarians* and their *Adversaries* hold not the same Foundation. A *supra-angelical Spirit* join'd to a *human Body*, or one who is a *Man by Nature*, and no more, appears to me to be quite another Foundation than one who is *true God by Nature, and true Man by Nature inseparably united in one Person*. Therefore on one side or the other the unavoidable Danger is manifest. Another Apostle has reckoned *the denial of the Lord that bought them*, to be not only a chief *Heresy*, but to be as it were *the Source and Complement of all damnable Heresies*, 2 Pet. 2. 1. Hence the Knowledge and Confession of him, as he is, appears to be necessary ; and consequently so is a *right Faith in the Doctrine of the Trinity*. More Proofs might be offered from the Apostles *John and Jude*, but we shall wave them. Suffer me only to add, *that the Form of Baptism* is, in my Judgment, a Demonstration of this. We need not tarry to explain these solemn Words, *baptizing them in, or unto the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, Mat. 28. 19. nor to shew that *these Three* are proposed *equally* as the joint Object of our Faith, and Worship, and Obedience ; that we are *equally dedicated* to them ; that here is no *Mark*, not the least *Intimation* of Superiority or Inferiority among them ; that an *equal Belief or Trust* in, an *equal Worship, Obedience, and Love of the blessed Three*, obliges us to believe that they are *equal in Nature and Perfections*, whose Authority, Power, and Glory are the same ; nor, that Men can't be *initiated* into Christianity without a Profession of *this Faith*, nor lookt upon as *Christians* if they doubt of, renounce, or reject it : We need not I say, insist upon this at present, since it appears *absolutely* necessary that all who expect *the Christian Salvation*, should *rightly* know *this Foundation*, yea, *this Epitome, or Summary* of our Faith, i. e. *the Doctrine of the Trinity*, seeing they are so expressly baptized into it. Is it possible that Men can rightly understand what they are to believe concerning *these Three*, and not know what they are ; or whether the Son and Spirit

be God or Creatures ? Can Men be safe who confound God and the Creatures ; believing God to be a Creature, or a Creature to be God ? I cannot see how they, in this State, can have *true* Gospel Righteousness or Holiness, and how they should then be *happy* I know not.

This has been generally believed by the Catholick Church in all Ages. If you will consult the very Learned Bishop Bull's *Judicium Ecclesie Catholice, trium primorum seculorum, de Necessitate Credendi, &c.* you may be satisfied, that the Catholick Church in the first and purest Ages, thought this Doctrine to be of that Importance. This has been the prevailing Opinion among the *Catholicks* ever since : That it has been the common Judgment of all the *Protestant* Churches will not be denied. I'll give you the Sentiments of some few Persons of great Note amongst our selves. Dr. *Sherlock*, a Writer of account, begins his present State of the *Socinian* Controversy with these words. " The Faith of the Holy Trinity is so Fundamental to the Christian Religion, that if Christianity be worth contending for, that is : For if God have not an eternal Son, and an eternal Spirit, the whole Mystery of our Redemption by Christ, and of our Sanctification by the Spirit, which in its Consequences is the whole of the Gospel, and distinguishes it from all other Religions, is utterly lost." And in the next Page, he tells us, " that those various Heresies relating to the Divinity, Person, and Offices of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, which have disturbed the Church in all Ages, is proof enough, how much the great Enemy of Mankind thinks himself concerned, by all possible means to corrupt this Faith.—And therefore it is no wonder, and ought to give no scandal to Christians, that these Disputes are again revived among us with as much Fury and Insolence as ever ; for there never was a more unhappy Season for the Enemy to sow his 'Tares." Pertinent words.

The Learned Dr. *Edwards* has given his Sentiments on this Subject in these memorable Lines. " So that indeed, the belief of this single Article concerning the *Divinity* of our Saviour, is so far from being an indifferent Matter, as some would persuade us, that it is absolutely necessary to the very *Being and Essence of the Christian Religion* : and the denial of it consequently must unavoidably occasion a fundamental Change in the whole Frame and Constitution of it. So that a Religion with this Doctrine, and another without it, are two Religions of a *different Species*, between which there must be a vast and irreconcilable disagreement : for as much as they cannot agree either in

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“ proposing the same *Articles to be believed*, or recommending the same Duties to be practised by their respective Professors *.” This is nervous Reasoning.

The Learned Dr. *Knight*'s words are not to be forgotten on this occasion: “ Were it matter of indifference what we believe, could we please God and attain to Happiness, as well with our Mistakes as right Apprehensions of the Object of Worship, all that I have said, howsoever true, would be useless Speculation.—The Conditions of Salvation are not to be made by him who receives, but gives the Reward; and whatsoever Opinion Men may conceive of the fitness of them, they are still such as God has appointed them, the Conditions of Salvation.—If we trust in *the Son*, together with *the Father*, yet don't confess him to be *God, the Word, the Life, and the Light, and the true God*, we still are short of the Faith required, we neglect the Conditions appointed by him who dispenses the Reward, we set up our Wisdom in opposition to God's, we will not be saved but on Terms of our own, and must blame none but our vain selves if we perish at last in our Infidelity and Folly †.” This is as *close* as clear:

The Learned Dr. *Calamy*, who never appeared upon the *uncharitable* side, gives his Judgment in these remarkable words. “ That notwithstanding the Divine Simplicity and Unity, there is a *Trinity* in the *Deity*, is a distinguishing Doctrine of Christianity; into the Belief whereof all its Votaries are to be solemnly initiated, and in which they are to continue all their Days: which has been always reckoned by Friends and Foes, one of its prime Articles.—And to convince that this is no mere Speculation, it is ordered, that both their Worship and their Lives should be influenced by this Principle. And that the Belief of it may be more firmly rooted, Care is taken that this Doctrine should run thro' the several Parts of Divine Revelation, and be interwoven with the other Truths, on which that lays the greatest stress, and which it most warmly recommends and inculcates. The very Frame of Christianity seems founded upon it.—The *Trinity* cannot be either denied, or mistaken, but Christianity must be extremely altered, and made a quite different thing from what it was, when it was first delivered to the World **.” Thus far he after his usual manner.

* *Edw. Preservative*. Part 3. p. 164.

† *Knight's Sermons*, p. 292—294.

** *Dr. Calamy's Sermons on the Trinity*, p. 1, 2.

I might produce a great many more, but it is needless. The Truth is, there are a very few Divines at home or abroad, who have written on *this Controversy*, but have express'd themselves *freely and openly* to this purpose. What appears *more considerable* to me, besides what has been hinted already, is this, That a mistake about *the Substance* of this Doctrine, *unavoidably* leads the Erroneous into *Idolatry* and *Blasphemy*, two heinous and crying Sins. They who believe *the Son to be God supreme*, and worship him *accordingly*, if he is not so, are manifestly *Idolaters*; and they who pay religious Worship, *all which is appropriate to the Lord our God and him only*, to any other, are *visibly* guilty of *the same Sin*: With this Difference, that tho they both (upon the former Supposition) have *forbidden Objects* of Worship; *those* act consistently, believing him whom they serve, to be *indeed* what their Worship *says* he is, *the true God*; but the Faith and Worship of *these* are *evident Contradictions* to each other; their Worship giving their Faith the Lie. He also who says *the Son is equal to the Father* in Nature, Perfections, and Glory, is most certainly a *Blasphemer*, if he is not so: And he who denies him *to be equal with the Father*, is guilty of *Blasphemy*, if he is so, or there never was a *Blasphemer* in the World. Nor are these *Consequences* only, but the *plain, obvious, natural Language* of their Faith and Worship. And it is plain that *Idolaters* and *Blasphemers*, can have no such *internal Qualities*, or *good Lives*, as to render them (without Mercy, and continuing such) *the proper Subjects* of Divine Favour.

Remember, that as I have not my self, so *I did* not cite the worthy Authors abovementioned, to determine on *which side* the danger lies, (tho they all do) but to shew that *the Doctrine of the Trinity* is of *that Importance*, that a *right Faith* of it is so necessary, that nothing we can possibly have can recommend us to the Divine Acceptance without it, *whatever that Faith be*; and that mistakes here can be no part of our Righteousness before God: Which is all that the Objection supposes; or your Sermon, I think, requires. I should have observed that you call this Doctrine, *the much controverted Doctrine of the Trinity*. Is it either the less sure, or less necessary, because it is much controverted? No, so far from it, that it appears to me to be *the more so*. The Devil would not have made such stirs about it, had it not been a *matter of so much moment*. Have you forgot that the Divinity of Christ is *the Rock*, *which the Gates* (the Power and Policy) of Hell should always batter, but yet *should not prevail*? Mat. 16. 18. Do you not remember *that Christ*
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was to be set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that should be spoken against. What hath the Christian Church in all Ages thought of the Men who controverted this Doctrine. You know there are no religious Truths, which are not controverted. We see Men disputing against our Religion *by the Bulk*; and the Bible in which it is contained. You know the *Providence, the Perfections, the very Existence of a Deity* is controverted. But does it take off any thing from the *Certainty or Importance* of these Truths, that some People shew us their Wickedness, and others their Madness? Pray consider *how, why, by whom,* and for *what* this Doctrine has been and is controverted; by *what means* the Controversy is now managed, and what are the *visible Effects* of it.

I am very sensible, that some of those things may seem harsh, as they generally do when People *think themselves concerned*, tho in other Circumstances we should think them evident plain Truths. And I am satisfied, that twenty Years ago Mr. Ball would have thought it no *uncharitable Clamour* to have said a great deal more on one side, and with more Heat: And if you should now be displeased I cannot help it; our Thoughts of necessary Truths do not make them less so. Only let me say, that there is not any thing offered upon this Head in these Papers, inconsistent with the *highest Charity* the Scripture requires. Our *Faith and Charity* are to go together: *That* is the Rule, the Motive, the Bond, and what gives the Measure of *Christian Charity*. Here is no presuming to *invade God's Province* and *determine Men's Eternal State*; no venturing to say what God *can* do, or *will* do with those who either *thrust* themselves, or are *deceived* by others into dangerous Errors: No, what we see and know, may be sometimes necessary to be spoken, even the *Sin and Danger* of these Courses, but *secret things belong to God* *. Those who think of *Salvation*, and the *means* to it, as I do, will, however *severely* they may censure Men's Faith or Lives, be cautious of following them any farther than *they see and know*. And we can never be sure but God may give them *Repentance and Remission of Sins at last*: but without these, there is, at least, great danger of their Salvation. As far as I know my self, I am *sincere* in this; and therefore, *whoever* be angry I hope you will not, since you have assured me that *Sincerity is our Righteousness*. And he that knows whether I am sincere or no, knows that I have

* Deut. 29. 29.

not said so much, out of any *rigid Humour*, or *Hatred* of any Man or Men upon Earth, and much less to *grate* upon you ; but from a *full Conviction of the Truth* ; and that both of us may be led more *sincerely* to *search the Scriptures*, John 5. 39. humbly and earnestly beg the Illumination of the Holy Spirit, and his Assistance in *teaching us all Things*, 1 John 2. 27. that we may *not lean to our own Understandings* * ; reject Truths which we cannot comprehend, *for no other Reason* ; strive too much to have *clear and distinct Ideas* in a matter above *finite Capacity* ; or hamper our selves *unnecessarily* with metaphysical Subtilties, or learned Jargon ; but laying aside *Prejudice, Pride, Party, Interest, &c.* may honestly follow whithersoever *the Scriptures of Truth* lead us ; remembering always *the danger of erring*.

Some have questioned your *Sincerity*, or *Judgment* in saying, you should not mingle any thing of this Nature with a practical Discourse, &c. Whether your Discourse may be called a *practical* Discourse may be left to you ; but they think that your *long Digression*, and one half of your Discourse besides, were *as far from your Text*, as *improper* in a *practical* Discourse, and as *unsuitable* in a *Funeral Sermon*, as this. Yea, if you thought that the substance of your Sermon was *true and proper* for the occasion, it seems necessary that you should answer *this* or some such Objection, to remove *the just Offence* that some of your Hearers could not but take at (what they thought) so many *new, strange, and groundless Errors*. Come we now to your Answer, which is certainly a *Nonsuch* !

I expected a Reply to this Objection at which you are so much troubled, or some *shew, some shadow* of an Answer, but was disappointed : Nothing appears but as *weak a shuffle* as any I ever heard. You have not so much as denied the Objection. One would have thought, that you would either have shewn us, that Men may have *such internal Qualities*, and *such good Lives*, as may render them the Subjects of Divine Favour at last, *without Faith* ; that *no Truths were so necessary* to be believed, but that Men might be holy here, and happy hereafter, tho they not only *believe*, but with all their might *oppose* them ; that *the Doctrine of the Trinity* particularly is not of *such Importance*, but that we may be *good Christians*, and *accepted of God* at last, tho guilty of *Idolatry and Blasphemy* all our Days ; that *Mistakes about these Truths*, are so far from having any

* Prov. 3. 5.

dangerous Consequences, that (provided we be what you call *sincere and diligent*) our acting up to them in our habitual Course, is our *Righteousness*; and that Men who believe that a *right Faith* in these Truths is *so necessary*, are a parcel of *Wretches uncharitably clamorous*, even tho they may be as *sincere* in these Sentiments as you are in *yours*, and therefore as *justly entitled* to the Favour of God upon the account of them. These, and the like, were what I supposed you would have shewn from *Scripture*, or *Reason*; (for as for the *Fathers*, many in the present Age are better Judges than they;) but no such Things appear; even tho the Objection should remain *unanswered*. Let us consider what you are pleased to call an Answer, which will not detain us long; and let the Reader look back, and observe it carefully, that I may save the trouble of transcribing.

“ A right Faith in this, and every Doctrine, &c.*” Why did you not say or the Prophets? Is *the Old Testament* indeed become useless, or ceased to be a Rule of *Manners and Faith* too? I remember that *Socinus* seems to be of this Judgment. A *right Faith* in every Doctrine, I grant, is indeed to be *desired*, nor is any to be *slighted*: but it is a *right Faith* in *necessary* Truths only, which the Objection intends, and which is *absolutely necessary* to Salvation. You would, it seems, put all Doctrines upon a Level, which is a *great Mistake*. Some Truths are necessary to the *very Being* of Faith, without the Belief of which there can be no Faith *properly* Christian, no *saving* Faith at all; others are necessary to *perfect* our Faith, and are more or less so, as they have a nearer or more remote Connection with the former. *Some Truths* are necessary as a *part of the Rule* of Life, *others* as *means* leading to it, *others both*; and some there are, even in *the New Testament*, which in our *Circumstances* seem to have no *necessary* Connection either with the one or the other. *Ignorance* of *some* excludes all from Salvation, but not of *others*; and so we say of *Mistakes* about them. “ For a wilful denial of our Assent, &c.*” This is a grave and serious Truth, but had you considered it you would have seen that it razes your whole Fabrick. You have told us above, that when they who did not bring forth Fruit, are said not to *understand* the word, this not understanding cannot signify not knowing it, but *not minding* it, pag. 11. Now if this be true of them *who brought forth no Fruit*, that they knew

the word, you will allow it to be more so of the *Faithful and Sincere*. And you will not *surely* deny that all may have a *right* Faith of what they know; and therefore *all Men* may have a *right* Faith (if your *Maxim* be true) of *the whole Word*; and consequently every *denial* of our Assent to what is revealed must be *wilful*, and a *damnable Sin*. I grant that a sincere Inquiry is our Duty, and that the sincere Inquirer, by the very Act, reverences his Maker; and at the same time must stedfastly affirm, that we have *competent Means and Opportunity* to know all that God hath revealed to us, as *necessary* to be known, in some measure, and according to our various Circumstances. This you have not offered to gain-say. God has given us competent Means, that are *able to make us wise to Salvation* *. All necessary Truths may be clearly perceived, so that we can have no Excuse for a Denial of our Assent to them. If you should doubt of this, you will perhaps believe *Socinus* upon this Head, as a much more impartial Judge than some others, who tells us, that the Scriptures are so *open and clear* in these Matters, that no Man *who is not quite stupid*, can miss understanding them: *ut nemo qui eas non intelligat, plane stupidus non videatur* †. If this is the Case, all *Denials* of our Assent *must needs* be *wilful*, and therefore in your Words a *damnable Sin*. Is there any Sin, truly Sin, which is not damnable? It seems you was sensible of this, and therefore fled to the last Shift, "That tho we have competent Means and Opportunity, yet, "where there is a *want of Capacity*, the *Obligation* to believe never commences." Now to cut off all needless Jangling, I shall suppose this to be true in the fullest Sense you desire, and yet it appears to me, that he who has Capacity to draw a *wrong Conclusion* from the Word of God, or *put a false Sense* upon it, has Capacity sufficient to see and perceive *the true meaning*; especially where the Texts are so *open and clear*, as *Socinus* affirms they are. Here you suppose that the Passages in the Bible relating to *the Doctrine of the Trinity*, and their necessary Truths, cannot be perceived, or all that follows is mere Impertinence. But all Parties are of another Mind, they all say they do know the meaning of the Words, and are *certain* in this Case. Those especially who have left the *Catholick Faith* in this Article of the Trinity, make no *such Excuse*, for they clearly see, that it cannot be deduced from the Bible, they see it to be *Non-*

* 2 Tim. 3. 15.

† Soc. Resp. ad 6 Scrup.

sense, a Contradiction, &c. Yea, they who live with us generally know every thing. The Catholicks, tho they acknowledge that they may not know the meaning of all the Texts which respect this Doctrine, may know but something relating to them, may be far from having clear and distinct Ideas of this Mystery; yet all of them believe, that the meaning of the Words may be so far perceived, that they may know and receive the Doctrine sufficiently for Faith and Practice, and may be preserved from all dangerous Errors about it. Nor can this be doubted, without the *biggest Reflection* upon the Scriptures, and their *blessed* Author. I am satisfied you would take it ill, if another would make *this Apology* for you, or say, that tho you preached this Doctrine many Years, and *pleaded* for it with much Warmth, yet you did not know what you said. Would you take it kindly, if I should say, Mr. Ball worshipped *Father, Son, and Spirit*, many Years, and yet did not know the meaning of the Words; did not know *who* or *what* they were, whether *one* or *two Gods*, whether a God by Nature, a God by Office, and a Creature; in a Word, did and said *he knew not what*. Suffer me to ask you if you know the meaning of the Words now? If you do not, you are you say under no Obligation to believe any thing concerning them, and had best run no Risque; if you do, pray inform us also: If we knew what you believe, we might know better what to say. As far as I am unacquainted with the Party, I have observed that when Men have gone off from the *old Foundation*, they have never known where to settle, have never been fixed in any thing but *opposing Truth*. They have been so far from agreeing in *one common Scheme*, that many of them have *Schemes of their own*, (which they reckon a mighty Favour to let any but themselves know) and yet even in those they are generally *floating and uncertain*. Some within a few Years have been *Semi-Arians, Clarkists, Arians, Sabellians, and Socinians*, backward and forward, *ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, 2 Tim. 3. 7. till they have openly declared *they were nothing*. It is not indeed easy to see how it can be otherwise. The Lord help us to take Warning, and be wise at their Expence, when we have so many *Beacons* set up before us.

What follows is one of the *sillyest Evasions* in Print. Having supposed that where there is no *Capacity* to know the meaning of Words, there is no *Obligation* to believe: you go on telling what would follow upon the other Supposition, which is nothing to the Purpose. I shall however offer a few *loose Reflections* upon such *unconnected Sayings*.

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The *meaning* of all Scripture Propositions may be *known*, at least in part, and as far as they are known, they may be believed. The great Judge does *what* he will, *because*, how, and when he will; and may do *what* he *pleases*, but cannot do any thing against his *unerring* Judgment. The Divine Will and Pleasure is *the Rule* of his Proceedings, which doth not remove but establish the *natural Differences* between Good and Evil. God does nothing to us, requires nothing of us, but *what is just*, tho we are not to *measure* his Ideas of *right*, and *fit*, *exactly* by ours. If I should suppose, that God should require us to believe some Words or Propositions, of which we know not *the meaning at all*; yet we might know his meaning, and be secure of it too, in other parts of the Revelation where the Sense is obvious. Upon this Supposition your *frightful* Consequence would not follow; for all that could be drawn from the Supposition is, that there might be *Ideas of some Phrases* in the Divine Mind, and he might oblige us to believe them, tho we have no *Ideas* of them at all. But the *Ideas* which the Words *elect*, *curfed*, *blessed*, &c. stand for, are *known*; and we know they signify very *different Ideas*; and that the *Idea* of *elect* in the Divine Mind is not *the Idea* of *curfed* in ours; because God would not deceive us. And therefore, if we should *absurdly* say, that God obliges us to have an *explicit* Faith in, and clear *Ideas* of some Words and Propositions, of which we cannot *at all perceive the meaning* more or less; yet we may be sure that if he used *well known* Words, he used them that he might be understood, and excite *the same Ideas* in our Minds which were in his (if I may speak so) according to our Capacity. I am weary of so much pitiful Impertinence, which deserves no notice, when things of so much Moment to the Souls of Men are under Consideration. Having supposed a very senseless Supposition, to make your Readers think you have something to say, when you have indeed nothing, you talk with an *Air* upon it; tho all you say seems to have something in it *ridiculous* or *profane*, of which you would be puzzled to shew either the Sense or Connection. But what comes of the Objection all the while? it seems you have *designedly* and *shrewdly* forgot that, and find it easier to answer such *Fancies* of your own. The Objection supposed nothing but this, that *all* may know what God has revealed as necessary to *all* to whom the Revelation comes; and the Denial of it better deserves to be called *Atheism*, than any thing else. Had you *sincerely* declared, that you know not the *meaning* of the Texts relating to *this Doctrine* at all; and therefore you have *no Faith* at all

all of it, nor can have: then what you have said might have look'd to the Purpose, and answered some End; but as it is, you might even as well have said nothing. Better by far have *no Ideas* of these things at all, than *Ideas so far from, so contrary to Truth, and to the things as they are.* Simple Ignorance is perhaps in all respects *safer* than Error. *Invincible Ignorance* I believe will excuse, but shall not think, while I have the Bible, that *Errors about necessary Truths are invincible.*

"It by no means follows, &c." This Paragraph amazed me. Where is the Connection! What Business had this Stuff here? Was you not answering an Objection? Nothing to any Purpose in the World follows from the preceeding Paragraph. *This, however, shews, that I did not wrong you in saying, that you designed your first Inquiry should reach the Case of all Men;* and it seems you think you have said enough to give Occasion for a tacit Objection, *that all Religions are upon a Level.* It would never have entred into the Mind of any Man, to think that this followed from any thing said in this Answer, but confusedly or not it must come in. You seem to grant, however, "that they are not, and that *Christianity brings the greatest Advantages, for promoting our future Happiness.*" But other Religions it seems may be *sufficient*; which *Supposition, or Affirmation,* appears to me to a *denial of the whole Bible.* Let us consider the other Religions. The *Jewish*, I suppose you will say, is the next best to *Christianity*; but our Lord has expressly told us the Fate of the *Jews, If ye believe not that I am, you shall die in your Sins.* John 8. 24. There is then no Salvation by *this Religion.* The *Mahometan* may come next, as having *something* both of *Judaism* and *Christianity* in it; but he that will read that *senseless Hodge-podge of Errors, that Fumble of Weakness and Superstition, the Alcoran;* in which there are also Commands or Indulgences for some of the *greatest Sins,* can hardly think *this sufficient.* The same, or worse things may be said of all the Schemes of Religion among the *Heathen,* tho much amended in many things, since the spreading of the Gospel among the Nations. *Natural Religion* strictly so called remains; of which, besides what might be offered from the Scriptures, and obvious Reason, I shall only say, that the *Prevalence* of some Religion or other all over the Earth, under the *Notion of Revelation;* or at best, of *some thing more* than could ever have been discovered by the mere *unassisted Light of Nature,* is to me a Demonstration that all the Nations of the World *thought natural Religion not sufficient;* and that if it was indeed sufficient,

all Mankind were ignorant of this, and thought otherwise. I am satisfied, that this is a *surer*, and *better* Ground to prove its *Insufficiency*, than all that has been or *can* be said to prove the contrary. But, if *other Religions* be sufficient, permit me to say, that *upon your Principles*, it will not be hard to prove, that the *Knowledge of Christianity* can scarcely be thought a Blessing to any Man. You are positive in the very next Words, that "the mere passive Light (as you learn-
" edly phrase it) or the Doctrine assented to, has no such Ef-
" fect," *i. e.* is *none of the Advantages* which Christianity has above other Religions, to promote our Happiness. If this be your meaning, and it is so I think, if these Words have any meaning, it should make a *Christian* Ears tingle, and fill all honest Hearts with Horror. I want then to know what are these *great Advantages* Christianity brings? You have not a Syllable of the *assisting Grace* of God, the *Sanctification* of the Spirit, the *Example* of the Christ, &c. in your whole Discourse: So that the mere passive Light seems to me to be *one* of the *greatest Advantages* Christianity has over other Religions, if not *the only one*; for the Mind's working with it is of another Consideration, and is not *owing to the Light*, but *to our selves*. If the mind (you seem to say Page 8.) works with the Light it has, it shall be accepted, and if not, it can have no such Expectation; so that if the Christian Religion has *any Advantages* over other Religions, it must be *chiefly in its Light*. I shall wave this unfavoury Subject, desiring you to ask your self, Whether one professing himself a *Minister of Christ* be well employed to say any the least Word, any which, or any how, that may give any, even the least remote Occasion to think, that *other Religions are upon a Level with Christianity*.

"I would not be understood, &c." No, you have said nothing, not one Word, whereby any Man living can know whether you or your Friend, had either *right* or *wrong* Notions of *the Trinity*. *Orthodox* Divines, notwithstanding your Suggestion, never had any *disagreeing Sentiments* about the Substance of this Doctrine. They *unanimously* believe that these *Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one Thing, the one true God, the God of Christians*. After all, I did not think that such a rational Explication of the Trinity, as the *Arian*, Dr. Clark's Scheme, or *your own*, had been so difficult, as that your Friend, under your Direction, and after *so much teaching*, might not have had a *clear and true* Conception of it. Whether the following Opinion was his or not, is the same to me: Only this must be said, it wants to be explained. All your Words, I think, may bear a *Catholick Sense*; and had they

they come from another might have past for true. How *shy*, how *smooth* is this? how *innocent*? and *far from the Language* our Hearts are *grieved* with at other Times. The *Abominations of Arius* may pass very well in Conversation, where People can hardly *see them at one view*; but they must be *smoothed, softened, disguised* in Print, lest their *native Deformity* make them appear *odious and impious*. "*The Father is, absolutely speaking, the one true God.*" I suppose you will own that *the Son* is God also; or, as you speak, *a God*. Well then, *absolutely* is either opposed to relatively, or it signifies in a peculiar manner, or in the highest Sense, or *exclusively*. The three first Senses come not up to your Purpose, besides, they are all ridiculous upon the former Supposition. I take the last therefore to be your meaning, and then *your Faith is, The Father is the one true God, exclusively of all others*. And if so, *the Son* is not *the one true God* at all; therefore *not God* at all, which you will not say. *To us there is but one God **, either then *Christ* is with *the Father the one God*, or he is not *a God to us* at all. He who is not *the one God*, is not *the true God*; for all *other Gods but the one God* are *false Gods*, or *improperly* so called, and then they are *not Gods*. If *the Son* then is not *the one God with the Father*, he is not *the true God*; therefore a *false God*, which you dare not say, or *no God*, which is contrary to the Supposition. Besides, upon *this Foot*, there are manifestly *two Gods, the Father, who is the one true God, and the Son another God* besides him; but these Propositions are contradictory, even in their Terms. Pray think whither such Opinions lead you. You are so confident here as to say, that "this perfectly agrees, &c." All these I, with as much Confidence, deny. There is *no Scripture Declaration*, no Text, which says any such thing; yea, this is contrary to the whole Bible. *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, are *the one true God*, according to the Scriptures, and in the Catholick Sense of *absolutely*, absolutely speaking *the one true God*. You know not, nor possibly can know *the Reason of Things* in these *Mysteries*; and therefore should be more diffident, when you assert *you know not what*. I have heard you declare your *Unacquaintedness* with the Testimony of the primitive Church, and am satisfied you have not took Time to inform your self *sufficiently* since. They that know their Testimony assures us, that they believed that *the Son and Spirit are, together with the Father, the one*

* 1 Cor. 8. 6.

true God. The ancient Catholicks acknowledged, that *the Father* is alone the first Person, and gave him *most* frequently the Title of *the one true God*; because he is *the Father*, and because of his *Supremacy* in the Work of our Redemption, which we also do. But none of them believed there were *two Gods*, or that *the Son* was an *inferior, made God*, or that any *such Person* could be *the Object of religious Worship*; but that *He*, and *the Spirit, with the Father*, are *the one* adorable God, the *one Object of Worship of Christians*; all this we also believe. You give us your Faith in the Words of the Apostle, *Eph. 4. 3—7.* telling us, “that this is sufficient to constitute, &c.” But you quite mistake both *the Sense and Scope* of that Text. The Apostle is not there proposing a *Creed*, or shewing what is, or what is not necessary to constitute us *Members of Christ's Body*, or qualify us for Salvation. His evident Design is to persuade Christians (People constituted Members already) to *Unity, Peace, and Love*. The Arguments adduced are *very proper and cogent*; yea, all *Motives* to press *Unity* among Christians may be drawn from, or resolved into them. *There is one Body*, of which all are Members; *one Spirit* informing and animating this Body; *one Lord and Head of this Body*, they therefore that hold not the Head, are not of this Body; *one Faith* which they all professed to believe, and which was *the Tessera* of their Communion (it seems none in those Times were so weak as to plead for *two Faiths* ever-five of each other; much less to fancy that Believers of both could be Members of *this one Body and one Head*;) *one Baptism*, by which they were all admitted Members, and which was the *visible Pledge and Sign* of their Union to Christ and each other; *one God and Father of all*, who is *supreme* in the OEconomy of Grace, and owns all the Members of this Body as his Children. These *powerful Arguments* he industriously sets down, to persuade Men to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, ver. 3. and mentions nothing further as absolutely necessary to this End; and if these are not indeed sufficient, ten thousand more would avail little: But there might be a great deal more *necessary to be believed* in order to *Salvation*. Besides, had the Apostle here been proposing a *Rule of Faith*, it is manifest he considers only *the OEconomy* of the Blessed Three, and not their *Theology*; and therefore unless he had expressly said, that *nothing further* was necessary to be believed, it could have done you no Service, since their *Divinity* is elsewhere proposed as *absolutely necessary* to be believed to *Salvation*. Withal, if *the Father* is *exclusively the one God*,
how

how come you to tell us of *another*? Do you not see that this must effectually and everlastingly break *this Unity* among Christians? What kind of an Argument would this have been to persuade to *Unity*, that there are *two Gods*? What *Peace* or *Agreement* can there be between those who believe in *one God*, and those who believe in *two*? Consider then, before you talk of *uncharitable Clamours*, who are the Men who dissolve *the Unity* of the Spirit. Nay, think *soberly* whether there *can* or *should* be *any Unity* of Affection, *such* as is required among *Christians*, where there is *little* or *none* in Faith, *the Bond of Peace*.

" But then he takes great Care to inculcate, *that the Father above all* *: $\delta \epsilon \nu \iota \pi \alpha \nu \tau \omega \nu$. And who denies this, or ever did? And yet *this same* Apostle useth *this same* Phrase of *the Son*, Rom. 9. 5. $\delta \epsilon \nu \iota \pi \alpha \nu \tau \omega \nu$. And then he takes great Care to inculcate, *that the Son is above all*. And is this indeed your Faith, is this that in which you divide from *the Catholick Church*? No, but it is in asserting that *the Father* is of a *superior* Nature to *the Son*; and if superior at all, *infinitely* superior: And consequently that *the Son* is not *God by Nature*, but a *Creature*, a *mere Creature* only: And the same may be said of *the Blessed Spirit*. And is this agreeable to *Scripture*, *the Reason of Things*, and *the Testimony of the primitive Church*? You have not said it, and I dare say will not.

Before we leave this, it must be remembred, that you assured us " your Friend was an utter Stranger to that Criminal Modesty, which is ashamed to confess Christ before Men †." Was this a *Virtue* in him! Why then have you been *so criminally* modest to decline a Confession of him, when you had so fair an Opportunity of doing it before the whole Nation? Whatever you said in the *Pulpit*, you have said little or nothing *here*: But I can give another Reason for it besides your *Modesty*: I freely declare, that this Part of your Friend's Character is no *proper Ingredient* in a Panegyrick upon any Man of any Party, in my Judgment. Our bold talking what we *may think* of Christ, in all Places, and before all Companies, is not *that confessing* of him, which is our *Duty* and *Glory*. Did Providence call us to this, we might find our *Confidence* leave us, and others might perceive our *Boldness* gone. The *Doctrine of the Trinity* is not to be bandied about in *every Ale-house*, nor should we give our selves the Liberty in *every Conversation* to use the Name of *God*, and of *the Blessed Three* so frequently,

* Page 19.

† Page 34.

lest we do it with *Irreverence, Rashness, or Passion, &c.* because of *this kind of profaning the Name of God, the Land mourns.* And it will be known hereafter, that it is *no small Part* of the Guilt of the Nation. The less we dispute about this or any Doctrine, I sincerely think it is the better. Besides, you or I do not *confess Christ*, but a *false Christ*, or rather a *Chimera* of our own Imagination. Let us tremble at the Thought!

“ And now, having, as I think, fully answered, &c.” Do you indeed think so? Have you said any thing like an Answer? Let *the Reader* judge. You conclude this Head with four Texts, from *the last* of which (as having said nothing to the Purpose before) you endeavour to prove your *main Proposition*. But here, as *usual*, they are all either *directly against* you, or *visibly impertinent*. Let us take a short view of them.

“ The Apostle places Heresies amongst the Works of the “ Flesh *, *Gal. 5. 10.*” He does so: What then? You seem to intimate, that *Heresies* being Works of the Flesh, and *Errors* not; therefore Errors are not Heresies, such Heresies at least as the Apostle speaks of. Now, if *I should grant that* the Word *Heresy* in Scripture never signifies an *Error about necessary Truths*, what would follow? Not, that such Errors are not *sinful*, and of the most *dangerous* Consequence, but that they are not rightly named Heresies, which alters not the Case betwixt us. Some have thought that this word in this Text, imports only divisive, factious Humours, rending and dividing Men into Parties whether Civil or Sacred, which they think, the Etymology will easily bear. Nor shall I contradict it at present. If it is so, this Text serves no purpose here. But if it signifies, as it generally does, *Schisms* occasioned by venting or propagating and defending Errors in Fundamentals; then they are as *properly* called *Works of the Flesh*, as *Idolatry* and *Witchcrafts*, are in the same Verse. They are indeed all Sins of the Mind, and *proceed from the Heart*, *Mat. 15. 19.* But are called *Works of the Flesh*, because they proceed from *the old Man*, the *unrenewed*, and *corrupt* part, here called *the Flesh*, as in many other Passages; in opposition to those we proceed from *the new Man*, the *renewed* part, under the Influence of the Holy Ghost, called *the Spirit*, *ver. 17. the Fruits of the Spirit*, *ver. 22—24.* So that *Heresies, dangerous Errors*, are, in the sense of the Apostle, *Works of the Flesh*; and according to the Parable, *Works of the Devil*.

"He also couples Faith with a good Conscience *." 1 Tim. 1. 5, 19. They are indeed inseparable. Without a true Faith there can be no good Conscience. A sober Unbeliever may have an excusing Conscience, but none but a true Believer can have a truly good one. A false Faith can have no such Companion. The Apostle speaks of Faith unfeigned; but the meaning is not, a sincere believing of what is false: but an upright Belief of what is true. Hymeneus and Philetus might sincerely think that the Resurrection was past, and yet, as they overthrew the Faith of some, it is evident they made Shipwreck of their own, 2 Tim. 2. 18. But you will not venture to say, that they either did, or could keep a good Conscience when they had so done. You all along suppose that a Man may be sincere in Error, and that this his Sincerity is his Righteousness; which this Text manifestly overturns, yea, destroys your whole Design. The Persons last mentioned may call their wicked Error, Faith: but it was not Faith, having no Testimony, much less Divine, to support it. And you may call Arianism, or your own Scheme, Faith: but if it is indeed an Error, it is not Faith, having no sufficient Evidence upon which it can stand; and if it is not Faith, it can't be coupled with a good Conscience. Here again you bring up some of the old Jargon, "a good Man will believe what he can, &c." And who can do, what he cannot? Did Mr. Ball when he believed, and preach'd, and vehemently pleaded for the received Doctrine of the Trinity, believe more than he could? I cannot stay to spend Time or Words on this pitiful shift. But since the old Excuse, the want of Ability to know, is still the last Resort; remember, that all owing the Excuse to be good, it excuses Ignorance only, not Error.

"Accordingly in another place, say you, the Apostle joins "Unbelief with an evil Heart, Heb. 3. 12." This is an obvious Mistake. The Apostle doth not join these as two different things, but Unbelief is that particular Evil of the Heart he cautions them against. I am satisfied you did not think or know what you was saying, or you would not have referred us to that Verse. Let us consider the Chapter. Christ is said to have builded the House, ver. 3. If he is not called God absolutely, ver. 4. of which another Time: yet he is a Son over his own House, ver. 6. It is his Voice we are commanded to hear, ver. 7. of whom the Discourse is continued to ver. 12. in which Verses we have many co-

Sent Arguments for his Divinity. Upon this the Apostle admonishes the *believing Hebrews* who were in danger of Apostatizing, to take heed, &c. *Unbelief* is the Sin he cautions them against; *departing from the Living God* is the *Unbelief*; *Christ is the Living God*. The whole Discourse is of him even to the end of the Chapter. It was of *Christ*, that Professors steady in the Faith, are made Partakers, ver. 14. None but *He* can be meant; for the *Hebrews* were not in danger of departing from *God the Father*, (upon your Principles) of whom there is not, I think one Syllable in the whole Chapter; but of *departing by Unbelief from Christ*, who is the living God. It seems that *Faith in Christ* was then accounted *Faith in the living God*; and *departing from this Faith*, was *departing from the living God*. Suffer me therefore to say to you, with the utmost Sincerity, and like one who can most heartily forgive all that is past; Take heed, Brother, lest there be in you, an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God. I take this Liberty, being in the very next Verse commanded, to exhort one another daily, lest any of us be hardened thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin, i. e. of Unbelief. There are many obvious Things in this Sin, that strangely bewitch and harden Men, hiding Conviction from their Eyes. Hence is that sad and affecting Observation verified, that of the many who are enchanted by the Delusions of Error, after they have received the Truth, few, very few are ever recovered, or brought to the acknowledgment of the Truth, as it is in Jesus. May the Lord help us both to take heed.

"And calls him only an Heretick who is self-condemned, "Tit. 3. 10, 11." By an Heretick you mean, one whose Conscience reproaches him with wilful Neglect, or who believes or says he believes against his Conscience? One or both of these you intend. Now suppose this to be the sense of the word, all that you can gain is, that we can call no Man Heretick, because without knowing the Heart, we can't be sure he is self-condemned. Well, let us wave this uncharitable word, and say instead of it, that some concerning the Faith have erred; that they have made Shipwreck of the Faith, &c. And then the Dispute will be, whether the Sincerity of such will be accepted as their Righteousness. He who overthrows the Faith of some, as Hymeneus and Philetus did, has made Shipwreck of his own, and cannot in my Opinion have either true Faith, or well grounded Hope. I conceive also that the Apostle has clearly determined this in the Negative, as you may see if you consult 2 Tim. 2. 16—26. If this was that Error which the Apostle had in his

Eye,

Eye, when he speaks of this *Hymeneus*, in his first Epistle, then he has very *convincingly* assured us, that his Error was no part of his Righteousness; for, *Hymeneus he delivered to Satan*, 1 Tim. 1. 20.

But it may be proper to consider this *much vexed* Text, Tit. 2. 10, 11. In the first part of that Chapter, the Apostle sends Directions to *Titus*, what to teach, to ver. 8. and what not, ver. 9. *But avoid foolish Questions, &c.* And in the next words instructs him how to deal with an *Heretick*. So that he means, perhaps, by the *Heretick*, not the Man who rejects or opposes any necessary Truth, as the word is elsewhere used in Scripture, as well as in common Conversation: but he who disturbed, vexed, and molested the Church, *rending and dividing it by foolish Questions, Genealogies, &c.* drawing a Party after him. The Word will easily admit this Sense, and the Connection seems to require it. Now, saith the Apostle, *after the first and second Admonition reject this Man, knowing that he that is such is subverted, turned out of the way, is perverse*, continuing in such a foolish, useless, sinful Course, *even after repeated Admonition*; and cannot but know in his Conscience, that Peace, Love, Unity, and Edification are too dear and valuable to be endangered for such Trifles; and that he ought to submit to Admonition in so plain a Case; and therefore is *condemned of himself* upon both Accounts. This Sense hath nothing in it for your Purpose. All that we can learn from it is, that there were *contentious* Persons in the Church from the beginning, as well as now, who out of *Pride*, or *Humour*, or other *Lusts*, would make havock of the Church's Peace for things of no moment, that such ought to be *admonished*, and *avoided* as publick Pests, the Destroyers of Christian Love; and that many Men may be *self-condemned*, upon the account of such things, when they would take it very ill to be told so.

But if we suppose that the Word is in this Text taken in its ordinary Signification, for one who *pertinaciously denies or opposes any necessary Article of Faith*, then the Direction here given to *Titus*, and in him to other Church-Officers, supposeth these things. That *Heresies* and *Hereticks* may be known, even tho we cannot, must not judge their Hearts: For the *Heretick* is supposed to be known to be such, before he is admonished, and to be admonished as an *Heretick*. That known *Hereticks* may and should be admonished. That if there be no Amendment after repeated Admonition, they should be *rejected*; the Church should *beware* of them, and *avoid* them as dangerous Persons, who may prove *infectious*. These things appear evident. If this be allowed to be the

I

Sense,

Sense, I conceive the 11th Verse may be fairly explained after *Hammond, Clark, and others*, thus. Knowing that he that is such, has *fallen from the Foundation, or some necessary Truth, sinneth*, and that grievously, both in yielding to these Abominations, and refusing to hear and submit to the Church; and is *condemned of himself, i. e. has inflicted the same Punishment on himself*, (*viz. Separation from Church Communion*) as the Church would have done, had it proceeded to censure. The Church was commanded to cast out such Persons, *Mat. 18. 17. Rom. 16. 17.* And it is well known, that *Hereticks* in the first Ages withdrew from the Communion of the Churches, *went out from them*, 1 *Joh. 2. 19.* not imagining it a part of *Christian Charity* to join with those who differed from them in Matters of such Importance. It seems both sides had other Thoughts of *Faith*, and *Church-Fellowship* than some have now. Well, says the Apostle, they have cut off themselves, have ye nothing to do with them, stand upon your Guard, avoid them; or by some publick Act declare that you reject them, and will have no Communion with them. When you consider this Text again, I suppose you will hardly find another meaning that suits so well with the Apostle's Scope, and the plain Signification of the Words: For it is self-evident, that the *Heretick* may be known even by them who must not presume to search the Heart, and that he is to be admonished and rejected as such. If this is the Sense, I can send you to many, and some not far off, who are *condemned of themselves*.

From this Proposition, or Principle if you will, that the Apostle calls him only an *Heretick*, who is self-condemned, tho the Word only is none of the Apostles, but of your own foisting in; you draw this Conclusion of the whole, "which clearly proves that Sincerity, &c. *" With what Glue, Cement, or Solder can you join these Propositions together? If you your self know, I am satisfied that no other Man in the World does. This, however, makes it evident, that I have not injured you, by saying that your chief Design thro' a great part of your Discourse was to insinuate, (for you have prov'd nothing) that provided a Man be what you call sincere, whether what he says he believes to be Truth or Error, yea, supposing it to be the greatest Error, it is so far from being his Sin, that it is his Righteousness. But your Consequence by no means follows from that Text, nor any other. If I should grant, that none but those whose Hearts condemn

them should be called Hereticks ; or allow you to put what
Sense you will upon that Text, does it, can it from thence
 be concluded, that Sincerity in Error is his Righteousness ?
 Can you think that *Hymeneus's Error concerning the Faith*
 was his Righteousness ? Can you suppose that that *fondness*
for the Law, which appeared among the *Gentile Christians*,
 (perverted herein by the *Jewish Converts*) *some of whom*
 we may safely grant were *sincere*, was *any part* of their
 Righteousness ? Did the Apostle *Paul's Sincerity*, when a
Persecutor, render him the proper Subject of Divine Fa-
 vour ? Surely you are afraid of so wild an Opinion. He as-
 sures us he was *sincere*, and I think we may take his Word
 for it : *I verily thought with my self, that I ought to do ma-*
ny things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, Acts
 26. 9. I dare say his Conscience before his Conversion ne-
 ver condemned him for so doing. This he declares himself
 in some of his Apologies, *I was zealous towards God as ye*
all are this Day, Acts 22. 3. I cannot indeed see how we
 can doubt his Sincerity and Diligence. But was he not a
 Blasphemer, a Persecutor, and injurious ? 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. And
 could these *Things* be his Righteousness ? I need not mul-
 tiply Words upon a self-evident Truth. Our Lord himself tel-
 leth his Disciples, *the Time cometh, that whoso killeth you*
will think that he doth God Service, John 16. 2. But will
their thinking make this acceptable Service ? I might also
 add, that upon this Supposition, *the Fact* of many who were
 concerned in putting *Christ himself* to Death, was so far
 from being their Sin, that it was their Righteousness ; *bor-*
resco referens ! But I pass it. It is undeniable from hence,
 as well as many other Considerations, that Persons Sincerity
 in *some Opinions* may be *their great Sin* ; and that the
 more diligently they pursue them, they sin still the more *bei-*
nously and grievously.

Is this then all the Proof for such a wicked Principle ? Is
 such Doctrine apt to promote either *true Piety* or *Christian*
Charity, as in your Preface you desire it may ? Was it indeed
 calculated for this End ? But I forbear. We look'd all along
 for Proofs, and at last that which comes is worse than none.
 Nor are we to expect any, unless we will take your *Affir-*
mations, which it seems must pass for *Maxims*, instead of
 them. You may perhaps, say that I should not be so hard
 upon you for want of *Proofs*, since I have been guilty thus
 far my self ; and a Friend of yours has let the World know as
 much. To which I answer, by asking you with what Mo-
 desty, with what Truth, could he give such a hint, when in
 all the Letters that past, we still declared our selves willing

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to propose them? Yea, we told you, they were ready, or should be quickly sent, &c. In one of the Letters, to pass the rest, are these Words, *the best way is to call for our Proofs*. Would it not have been fair, either to have called for them, or to let the World know we were ready to produce them, rather than conceal this Expression, and with a Spice of *Arian-Sincerity* reproach us for the want of them? But you were in a hurry, could not wait, but must instruct others, and let us know how *wonderfully* you could defend your Opinions, and how *little* you valued us. Tho by this time it is known to every Body, that you might both of you have instructed the World with more Advantage, had you read your Papers *once* more, and that the Nation will be neither better nor wiser for a *thousand* such *prodigious* Performances.

You conclude this General as you began it, with your beloved Proposition, *When God shall judge the World by Jesus Christ*. I confess it appears very *natural* in these Men, who contend *so* zealously for the *peerless* Majesty of God the Father, as to set the Son at an *infinite* Distance from him, to *chuse*, and to *wish* rather to be judged by him than the other.

Before I proceed, I must put the Reader in mind, that I am not decrying *Sincerity*, or the *faithful* Performance of what God reveals to us, as our Duty. No, by no means; I am only pleading that *no Sincerity* is or can be *accepted*, as the *meritorious Cause* of our Justification and Salvation; that *no Sincerity* can render us the Subjects of Divine Favour, but that which proceeds from a renewed Heart, a Principle of true Faith, is directed by the Word of God, referred to his Glory, under the Conduct of the Spirit; that *all the Sincerity* which Men, erring from the *principal* Truths of the Gospel, can have, is not, cannot be their Righteousness; in a Word, that *that Fidelity* or *Sincerity* which the Gospel requires, cannot subsist with the *total Ignorance*, much less with the *Denial* of *necessary*, *fundamental* Truths. Where there is no *true Sincerity*, I grant there is no *saving Faith*; and where there is no *right Faith*, there can be no *acceptable Sincerity*. True Believers are *sincere* and *unfeigned* in Faith and Holiness both. They *indeed believe* what they say they believe; they *receive the good Seed*, are directed, influenced, excited, encouraged, and supported by it in the whole of their Way. They are also *sincere in Holiness*; as *their Hands are clean*, so *their Hearts are pure* *; as they *wash*

the outside of the Cup and Platter, so do they the inside †. There may be many Failures in their Hearts or Hands, yet in *the main* they are right; the Byas of their Souls, and the general Course of their Actions, are agreeable to the *Doctrines* and *Precepts* of the Gospel. In short, tho I will not, dare not say, that *Sincerity is our Righteousness*, yet I shall freely say, that there can be no *Righteousness* where there is no *Sincerity*.

But since you lay such a Stress upon *Sincerity*, it might have been proper to have told us what *this Sincerity* is; wherein it consists; what Failures are consistent with it, and what *Righteousness* we must have, instead of that which is *so imperfect* as our own; and especially, whence this *Sincerity* is. I observe, *with much Surprise*, that there is not one Word of the *preventing* or *assisting* Grace of God, no not one; nor one *Syllable* of the *illuminating sanctifying Influences* of the Holy Spirit, in your whole Discourse: So that it appears to me, that your Opinion is, that Men have *this Sincerity naturally*, or *may acquire* it by Study, Application, and Diligence. I am not sure that you will say this in *so many Words*, because it seems to clash with the *whole Book of God*; but it agrees very well with every thing you have said upon this Head. The Scripture gives us another account of this *Sincerity*, or *Honesty* of Heart, which God will accept. It no where speaks of our having it *naturally*, or of our *acquiring* it of our selves. The Hearts of Men before the Flood were not *naturally sincere*; God himself saw, not only that *the Wickedness of Man was great upon the Earth*, but that *every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually*, Gen. 6. 5. The very first Motions, Inclinations, Appetites, Springs, and unformed Thoughts of his Heart were only evil, continually so: Surely here was no *Sincerity*. If we may credit *the same infallible Judge*, the Case was not bettered after the Flood, *the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth*, Gen. 8. 21. In *Jeremiah's* Days things seem to have been as they were before, *the Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* Jer. 15. 9. Still we find no *natural Sincerity*. Man doth not, cannot know *the Deceitfulness* of his own Heart: Is *Sincerity* then so easily come by? Many *Hints* of the same kind are to be found in the *Psalms* and the *Prophets*. If we would know whether the Heart was *naturally more sincere* in the Days of the Apostles, a-

† Mat. 23. 26.

mong many other places, we may learn from *Rom. 1. 1 Cor. 1. Eph. 2. 2, 3. and ch. 4. 18, &c.* The most diligent Searchers among the Heathen arrived not at the true Knowledge of God, *1 Cor. 1. 21. The World by Wisdom knew not God.* So that it seems *Sincerity* cannot be acquired by us, of our selves; or, at least, not without so much Difficulty, that one in many Millions cannot overtake it. The *Ephesians* before the preaching of the Gospel among them, were without God, without Christ, and without Hope in the World. *Eph. 2. 12.* This seems to have been the Case universally. But if any of them were sincere, and if *Sincerity* is their Righteousness, it did them but little Service: For it is a poor Righteousness that gives no solid Ground of Hope, and yet theirs, if they had any, did not. Whence then is this Sincerity? Whither shall we follow her? Where shall we meet with her that will be every thing to us? *Happy the Man that findeth her.* It appears, I think, that acceptable Sincerity, or Honesty of Heart, is the Property of the new Nature, the new Heart only, which is one of the chief Promises of the new Covenant. There is no such Sincerity in the unregenerate or unconverted. All the Sincerity that such can have will be of no Avail at all for Salvation. Much might be said upon this excellent Subject; but it is Time to proceed to the next General.

II. To shew that this World is not a fit Place for God to make such a visible Distinction between good and bad Men as their different Dispositions and Actions require.

This will be soon considered. What you say is in a great Measure true; but it is intirely foreign to the Text and Context, and so should have had no Place, or very little in this Discourse. Our Lord has given us no particular Explication of those Circumstances of the Parable to which your Proposition refers: But it seems Mr. Ball could and would supply that Defect. But since you undertook this, the Point you should have laboured, was, to shew some of those wise and holy Reasons why the Householder would not permit the Servants to gather up the Tares, but gave Orders that both should grow together until the Harvest; even tho he knew that they would prove Matter of Grief to the weak, a Snare to the unwary, trying to the strong, and offensive to all. This you should have done; many such might have been proposed; our Lord and his Apostles have offered several, but you wisely skipt them over. Nor is there one single Thought upon this General, that looks this Way. I have frequently observed, that you had no Business without the visible Church at all, in it was the Scene of the Parable laid. I must also observe,

observe, that in almost five Pages, there is not a Sentence that comes up even to *your own Purpose*, but four or five at most. The same *Weakness* appears here, as above : Nor have you said any thing near so close and pertinent, as many even of the Heathens have done long ago.

You begin, " This is not to be understood as if God did " not sometimes make a remarkable Difference betwixt " good and bad Men, whether we respect particular Persons " or Communities *." No, nor no Man in the World would have so understood your Words. " Especially in those Times " and Places, when and where the prophetick Spirit was " more sparingly vouchsafed †." The quite contrary to this appears to me to be true, and that those *remarkable Differences* were most frequent, when and where the prophetick Spirit was most *plentifully* vouchsafed. In old Testament Times temporal Promises and Threatnings too were *many, clear, and positive* ; they suited *that Dispensation well*, and we cannot doubt but they were *generally* performed. The *Jewish History* abounds with more Instances of this kind, than any in the World. It was always *well* with that People when they followed their Duty, *according to God's Promises* ; and always *ill* with them soon after they forsook it, *according to his Threatnings*. And the Case I apt to think was much the same with *particular* Persons pretty generally ; which cannot be said of any other People upon Earth. The Example of *Job's* Friends, and their Sentiments would not prove your Point : but I must hasten, since the Lord himself has expressly determined this against you, *Amos 3. 2. You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth ; therefore I will punish you for all your Iniquities.* You produce for Examples of God's distinguishing Judgments, *Cain, Achan, Gehazi, the old World, and Sodom ***, and you might have added an hundred more. But you have the *oddest* Remark in a pair of Brackets, upon the *second* and *third* of these, that I ever saw or heard, *viz.* " We have no " Reason to think, that the Persons last mentioned (*Achan* " and *Gehazi*) were Sinners, but in these particular Actions, " however they visibly suffer for their Offences." What ! no Reason to think, that they were Sinners ? How came this into your Mind ? It is evident they had both indulged themselves in Covetousness, which, when an Opportunity offered, *broke out* with some heinous Circumstances. And were they not Sinners in this, to say no more ? In *Gehazi's* Case par-

* Page 20. † Page 21. ** Ibid.

ricularly, there was a Complication of Sins, which *this Lust*, when it had conceived, brought forth. He seems to have been not unlike *the Tares* in the Text. He regarded not what his good Master had sworn by the Lord, which he could not but know was agreeable to his Will, 2 Kings 5. 16. He yielded to his covetous Temper, and very profanely swore by *Jehovah*, ver. 20. He told a most wilful, premeditated Lye, ver. 22. He offended, doing what might have proved a *stumbling Block* to Naaman, giving him Reason to think Evil of the Prophet, who had sworn he would receive none, ver. 16. He might have been an Offence to Naaman's Servants also, in lessening their Love and Reverence for a Man who had solemnly sworn, and receded from his Oath in a few Minutes. He took Naaman's Present in his Master's Name, and so was no other than a Robber, ver. 23. Told another Lye to the Prophet, ver. 25. Were these the Actions of a Man who was no Sinner before? No; *nemo repente fit turpissimus*: So that it is plain he was a Worker of Iniquity. Nor can I see any Reason we have to believe him to have been any other than a wicked Wretch.

But while you are making a Remark, suffer me to make one too, which I oppose to some of your Sayings, Page 16. And a Remark it is both *aweful* and *affecting*; that the Posterity of Achan and Gehazi suffered upon the account of their Father's Sins. Achan's Sons and Daughters were stoned with him, the Lord troubled them, Josh. 7. 24, 25. This was a very terrible Judgment, to suffer under such Tokens of God's Displeasure, and by his express Command, ver. 15. without space for Repentance. His own Sin was very great, in transgressing the Covenant of the Lord, working Folly in Israel, and being the sinful Occasion of the Death of thirty six Men, ver. 5. so that his Punishment was but just. But what shall we say of his Children? If we should grant all of them, one way or another, were guilty with him, by Privy, Silence, Consent, or Assistance, in keeping or hiding the accursed thing, which doth not appear: Or, that all of them having forfeited their Lives by former Sins, God might justly require them now in this dreadful way and manner; which is as uncertain. Yet it was not so in Gehazi's Case; none of his Children seem to have known any thing of his sudden and wicked Resolution, or more vile Actions, or any way to have consented; for as soon as he had hid his Treasure in the Tower, or secret Place, he went immediately in and stood before his Master, 2 Kings 5. 25. and yet the Leprosy of Naaman was to cleave to him, and to his Seed for ever, ver. 27. An incurable Leprosy, and that upon his Seed not yet born!

And

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And that with these *doleful* Circumstances, that they were not only rendred incapable of all *publick* Service, but, like all other *Lepers*, were to be debarred the Conversation of Men; and, which is much more, *thrust out from the Congregation of the Lord for ever* *. Now this seems severe, and it is hard for human Reason to think it is just. *The Son shall not die for the Iniquity of his Father, but every Man shall bear his own Iniquity*, is the Language of Reason. And tho God did *this according to his Will and Pleasure*, yet it was *by his unerring Judgment of what is fit and right*. Let then both of us speak *modestly*, when we speak of the Ways of God, *who giveth not Account of his Matters*, Job 23. 13. *whose Judgements are a great Deep*, Plal. 36. 6. lest we be found *speaking wickedly for him*, Job 13. 7. What God does I am satisfied is *just and holy*, nor dare I enquire into *his Reasons*. His doing Things is enough to *justify* them to me: Nor can I forbear thinking it a great *Degree of Atheism*, to arraign God at our Bar, and judge of his *Decrees, Counsels, or Works*, by what appears to us to be *fit and right*. His own *Will* is the *eternal Rule of Justice*, in it I desire to acquiesce, and not presume to exercise *my self with Matters too high for me*. It is sufficient for us, that all that God requires of us is agreeable to *our own Reason*, when our Minds are *rightly* informed: But let us not dare to *measure him or his Ways* by our weak and shallow Conceptions. Humility and Fear are necessary Graces.

In the next Page you tell us, "we have as great Instances " of God's merciful Care and Providence over good Men †," adducing for Examples *Noah, Lot, Joseph, Moses, and David*; and you might have added many more. But how *Moses* came in among the *good Men*, I know not. If we believe himself, *Exod. 2. 2.* or the Apostle, *Heb. 11. 23.* *Moses* (when he was delivered to *Pharaoh's Daughter*, to be nourished and brought up in the Court of *Egypt*) was but an *Infant of three Months old*, who had done *neither Good nor Evil*. It is not easy to forbear asking, was you awake?

I agree with you, "that the Path of Righteousness is very " often rough and unequal, &c." But what had you to do with this here, forgetting what you propos'd? "Our Lord was indeed accounted a *Blasphemer*, and an *Impostor*, &c.**" And it is as true, in my Opinion, that either all the *Arians* and *Socinians* in the World are *Blasphemers*, or *our Lord himself*

* Lev. 3. 46. 2 Kings 15. 5.

† Page 22.

** Page 23.

was a *Blasphemer*, or was at least a very *unfit Person* to teach the World; and therefore an *Impostor*. The two last parts of the disjunctive Proposition, you will allow are *impious* and *blasphemous* Assertions, and the first I dare say you will call a very *uncharitable Clamour*. Let us see if we can make any of them good. The Ground of *this Charge* brought against him by the *Jews*, was *his assuming to himself that which was proper to God only*, thereby in Effect making himself *God*, equal with him, any one who assumes these to himself without Right, is a manifest *Blasphemer*: they thought that he assumed these to himself without Right; and therefore charged him as such. When he said to the Man sick of the Palsy, *thy Sins be forgiven thee*, Mark 2. 5. they said, *why doth this Man thus speak Blasphemies? who can forgive Sins, but God only?* ver. 7. They accuse him with pretending to that Authority and Power which is proper to God alone. When he reply'd, by way of Apology, to the *Jews* who sought to slay him, for making a Man whole on the Sabbath, John 5. 16. *My Father*, (my own proper Father) *worketh hitherto, and I work*, ver. 17. they charge him with saying, *that God was his own proper Father*, *πατήρ ἰδίον*, thereby making himself equal with God, ver. 18. [It seems these Phrases had a well known meaning, at that time, for the *Jews* always put the same Sense on them, and still accused our Saviour when he used them.] When our Lord had said, *Before Abraham was, I am*, John 8. 55. (the Import of the Words was very obvious till the Days of *Lælius Socinus*) they took up Stones to cast at him, knowing he had spoken of himself as *eternal*, and therefore *God*. The same Charge is advanced, John 10. 33. *we stone thee for Blasphemy, because that thou being a Man makest thy self God*. How had he done so? even by saying *I and the Father are one*, ver. 30. This was one of the Accusations brought against him upon his Tryal, John 19. 7. *we have a Law*, (the Law against Blasphemy, Lev. 24. 16.) *and by our Law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God*, i. e. Son of God in the highest and only proper Sense of that Phrase, so his Son as to be equal with him. Much has been said upon this excellent Subject already, so that I shall be brief. Either this Charge was justly deduced from his Words or not; if it was justly drawn from them, he was either equal with the Father or not; if he is indeed equal with him, all that deny this are *Blasphemers* in the highest Degree. If he is not equal with God, then he certainly did not say so, his Words were misunderstood, and no such Accusation could be justly drawn from, or founded upon them,

or we must say he was a Lyar. Well, granting that the *Jews* did mistake his meaning either *ignorantly* or *wilfully*, should he not have undeceived them? Would not an *honest Man* have done so most readily and plainly? Will a *good Man* be willingly and unjustly slandered as a Blasphemer, when he may *easily*, and *with a Word*, remove the *Ground* of the Accusation? Did not *the Glory* of his Father, our Lord's *own Character*, and *Pity* for the Souls of Men, strongly oblige him to this? But did he any such thing? No, never at any time: So far from it, that even in that Context, *John* 10. where he answered *softly*, and *ad hominem*, to avoid their Fury, *because his Time was not yet come*; he again in Effect says the same thing, in *as strong*, tho' *less offensive* Terms, *ver. 37, 38*. Upon which the *Jews*, knowing that he had retracted nothing, *sought again to take him*, *ver. 39*. Would it not have been easy to have said, I have Reason to call God *my (own proper) Father*; for he is my Father in a *peculiar manner*: But I said not, *I am equal with him*, I designed no such thing, nor can this be drawn from my Words, and therefore they cannot *amount to Blasphemy*. Can we suppose that our Lord would suffer the *Jews* to continue in this Mistake, be still accused for the same thing, and give Occasion to the Disciples to err in this Matter as well as they? Dare we think that he would not undeceive them, or make some Defence even *upon his Tryal*? Is it to be imagined that he would *die upon this*, and so *justify* their Sentence against him; for *the Blasphemer was to die the Death* by the Law? In all *Criminal Cases*, when the *Prisoner* has not Confidence before the Judge and Jury to plead *not guilty*, no Man supposeth it uncharitable to say *he is guilty*. Did our Lord *deny this Accusation* at the Bar, or so much as *explain* himself upon this Head? Can any who believe him to have been an honest, good Man, suppose that he would have been *silent* under *such a Charge* at *such a Time*, when he might so easily have set things to rights? Should not he in the plainest manner have convinced them that he was *accused falsely*, and that the Charge could not be supported, especially now that *his Life was at stake*? Nay, can he upon this Supposition be vindicated from being *sinfully accessory* to his own Death, since *Silence* at the Bar is equivalent to a Confession? If he would not gratify the *perverse Jews* so much, who appeared his most bitter and virulent Enemies, might he not have told *Pilate*, who behaved himself *friendly*, that they put a *malicious Construction* upon his Words? "He called himself indeed *the Son of God*, but "meant nothing less by it, than *making himself equal with*

" him : For *Adam* was the *Son of God*, and his Accusers knew
 " that *Angels*, and all good Men are the *Sons of God*, and so
 " he might say that he was the *Son of God* without *Blasphemy*. He said indeed, *I and the Father are one*, but meant
 " not an Unity of *Essence* and *Perfections*, but of *Will* and
 " *Consent* only ; and therefore their Charge was false. He
 " acknowledged that he had said, *Before Abraham was I*
 " *am*, but he might have expressed a great deal more, and
 " not mean Eternity, or intend to teach that he was *Jehovah*, the Eternal God ; and therefore their Accusation was
 " malicious. He had *forgiven Sins*, but he at the same time
 " said, that *the Son of Man* had *Power upon Earth* to *forgive*
 " *Sins*, and that he did not assume to himself the *Power*
 " and *Authority* of God, and much less pretended that he
 " was a *Divine Person*, and equal with God ; and so he
 " was unjustly charged with *Blasphemy*." When he was
 asked concerning his *Disciples* and *Doctrine*, John 18.
 19. he reply'd ver. 20. When asked concerning his *Pretensions*
 to be a King, the King of the Jews, (the *Messiah*) ver. 33. he answered directly, ver. 36, 37. But
 when the Charge was advanced, that he made himself
 the Son of God, ch. 19. 7. which *Pilate* understood to signify
 not his Office but *Nature*, and therefore asked him not
 what he was, but whence he was, ver. 9. he gave no Answer.
 Was not this a Confession that he was the Son of God, his
 Son by Nature, so his Son as to be God, equal with him ;
 for this was the constant Sense that the Jews put upon these
 Words, in which *Pilate* seems to have agreed with them ?
 It appears then to me, with an irresistible Evidence, that
 the Jews were not mistaken, that he was indeed equal with
 God, and that all who deny it are *Blasphemers*. But sup-
 posing he did not intend to make himself equal with God,
 yet since he would not, did not clearly undeceive the Jews
 nor *Pilate*, how is this consistent with your famous Interpretation
 of *Phil. 2. 6. who being in the form of God, did not*
covet to be honoured as God *. This certainly look'd like
 coveting to be honoured as God, that tho he was frequently
 charged with making himself equal to God, he would never
 so much as once undeceive his Accusers. If this was not
 an Evidence of such a sacrilegious, ambitious Temper (sup-
 posing him not to be equal with God) nothing in the World
 could be. For it is impossible he could have done more,
 than say such Words upon several Occasions, which gave vio-

* Clark's Scrip. Doct. Numb. 93c.

lent, yea just Suspicion to his Hearers to think, that he *made himself equal with God*, and never once deny the Accusation, tho frequently charged with it. Such a Charge would have filled a pious, humble Person with Horror, and made him instantly deny the Accusation with the utmost Earnestness, and give the plainest Account of his Words and Meaning possible. It is therefore manifest that what our Lord was charged with was true, viz. that he *made himself equal with God*; or he was the most *unfit Man* to teach the World that ever was in it, and indeed either the greatest *Blasphemer*, or the greatest *Impostor* that ever was. *Moses* and the *Prophets* never acted such a part; neither did any of the *Heathen Lawgivers*, *Solon*, *Lycurgus*, *Numa*, *Confutius*, &c. no nor *Mahomet* affect such Language, no, nor any mad *Heretick*, antient or modern, that I know of, except *Simon* the Magician, and I think *Servetus*. If then our Lord was a *Blasphemer*, in assuming to himself what was not his due, we are *Blasphemers* also in ascribing these things to him. If the *Jews* charged him with nothing but Truth, and what was justly drawn from his Words, then you and your Party, with the *Jews* who denied this, are the *Blasphemers*. But if they mistook his Sense, which yet seemed the natural and only Sense of the Words, seeing he did not, would not deceive them, he was, in my Judgment, most certainly one of the greatest *Impostors* that ever appeared upon Earth. I shall leave you to chuse which you will in so manifest a Case: But after the most *sincere Inquiry*, I firmly believe that one or the other of them is true; and therefore, if you should be never so angry, 'tis a part of my *Righteousness*.

I believe I should have waved this altogether, had it not been to guard my own Hearers against some *vile Suggestions*, which have been palmed upon them with much Confidence of late. The *Son's Equality with the Father*, supposing it true, so manifestly destroys *Arianism* in all its *Shapes* and *Disguises*, that the Party has been taught most carefully to oppose this. Those Words *Philip. 2. 6. who being in the Form of God, and thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, &c. are easily remembred, and seem so direct a Proof, that some were for a long Time unwilling to let them go, or give up *their Faith* in this Point. It was then with much Assurance affirmed, by very extraordinary Judges, that the Words were mistranslated, and that no such thing was intended. This was much doubted of at first; but they were then told that the Words, if rightly translated, would directly destroy the *Son's Equality with the Father*. Yea, that they might clinch the Nail, they were assured, that not

not only *all good Judges* would freely own it, but that even *Mr. Millar*, they were confident, would acknowledge so much. I shall leave it to you to say, whether a *sincere Enquirer* after Truth would have took this upon such false Allegations, in a Matter of *so much Moment*, without asking me, who never said, never thought this in my Life : So far from it that when I was told of this *old Arian* way of making Profelytes, I said, and now say it again, that I am willing to put the whole Controversy betwixt us on *this single Argument*, and to prosecute it as you shall please to direct. This is but one of the *mean wicked Methods* that have been taken here to make Converts, and a Way it is *becoming* the Cause. But more of this may come hereafter.

It is very true, "that for the first three hundred Years, *the Blood of the Martyrs* was often said, and with good Reason, to have been *the Seed of the Church* *." And it may be added, that *the Blood of the Catholicks*, the *Seas of Blood* shed by the *perfidious, cruel Arians*, in the next Centuries, was also *the Seed of the Church*, confirming Millions in the Faith of Christ, and winning others to it, who observed the *Peace, Steadiness, and Joy* with which they suffered, and hath brought a *Load of Infamy* upon the Memory of that *wicked Crew*, their Principles and Practices ever since.

You give us another of your Maxims in the next Words, which, or the like, because I have heard before, I fancy you are in Love with : "There is no Help for this in the ordinary Course of Things, unless God should deny Men the Exercise of their Liberty †." That is, *the Righteous* must expect bad Treatment from *the wicked*, and there is no Help for it, unless God *unman* them ; for they cannot be deprived of *the Exercise of their Liberty*, whilst they remain *rational* Creatures, or till *they cease to be Men*. He would indeed change the ordinary Course of Things with a Witness, did he deny them *this*. We need not dive into profound Subtleties that have nothing in them, upon so easy a Point. Let me only ask you, Did God design to *deny Men the Exercise of their Liberty*, when he promises to *give them one Heart*? Ezek. 11. 19. a very strange thing! *One Heart and one Way*, Jer. 32. 39. a much stranger Thing! Did he intend to rob Men of their *natural Powers*, when he promiset^h that *the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid*, Isa. 11. 6. Did he deny *Cyrus*

* Page 23.

† Page 24.

his Liberty, when *he stirred up his Heart to send home the Jews*, against all the known Rules of Policy? *Ezra 1. 1.* Did he deny the Soldier his Liberty, when the Scripture was fulfilled, *A Bone of him shall not be broken?* *John 19. 36.* When he gives his People Favour in the Eyes of their cruel Foes **, and makes their Enemies treat them well, *Jer. 15. 11.* and inclines them to do them Good; does he unman them, force them, or tie up their Hands? No, in all these Cases he leaves them the Exercise of their Liberty. Suffer me to say, that I shall still think, that the more of the merciful Assistances of Grace Men have, restraining them from Evil, and moving them to Good, (as long as God deals with them in a rational Way, illuminating their Minds, removing Objects of Sin, impressing the Sense of Duty, &c.) they have still the more free and desirable Exercise of their Liberty. But finding little more here to any Purpose, we pass on to your next General, to prove,

III. That the future World will fully manifest God's Displeasure against the Evil, and his Approbation of, and Complacency in the Righteous, *when they shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father **.

This is a common, easy, and rich Subject, upon which one would have thought nothing could have been said but what all are agreed in. But because you give us some further Hints of Sincerity, mingled with some things very offensive, I shall wave lesser Matters, as I have all along done, and remark only upon a few of the most considerable.

" Their Names will be vindicated from the vile Aspersions cast upon them, even for those very Things in which they have given to the Searcher of Hearts the greatest Proof of their observant Regard, in doing what they really thought tended to his Honour. *Heretick*, or *Schismatick*, or whatever blind Rage, or religious Bigotry, (which is generally the most devilish of any thing) can invent, as a mark of Infamy, has been here thought their deserved Character †."

This last Sentence shews us the meaning of the former. The Names of the Righteous, I shall grant, will be vindicated from all unjust Aspersions cast upon them. If they were without Cause called *Hereticks* or *Schismaticks*, their Innocence shall be made appear. But if they were at any Time indeed such, it shall be declared that they are pardoned, that all those Sins are forgiven; but not that they were never *Hereticks* or *Schismaticks*. The Judgment of God is accor-

** Dan. 1. 9:

* Page 25.

† Page 27.

ding to Truth. You tell us above, Page 11. "The Sincere
 " first *hear* the Word, and then *understand* it, and then re-
 " ceive and embrace what they hear, *i. e.* understand." He
 then that knows not *the true meaning* of the Word, for this
 and this only I take to be *understanding* it, is not, cannot
 have *Honesty* of Heart, if your *Saying* be true. And there-
 fore, if he hath given to *the Searcher of Hearts*, the great-
 est *Proof* of his *observant Regard* in doing what he *really*
 thought tended to his Honour; yet, if that, or those Things,
 were not *commanded*, or *revealed* to him, and tended not
 indeed to his Honour; his doing them is no part of his
 Righteousness, nor shall he be vindicated from the *just* Charge
 of *working Wickedness*. This *sincere thinking* doth not al-
 ter the nature of Things, make that *agreesable* to God's
 Will, which is *directly against* it, bring *Glory* to God, which
 indeed dishonours him; or make that which is *sinful in it*
self, *lawful to him*. Can you imagine, that your believing
the Blessed Three to be the one God, and worshipping them
 as such, *tended to the Glory of God*; and that *the Change* of
 your Faith and Worship has a *Tendency* to promote *the same*
 End, even tho you might *really* think both at different
 times? You will not, I believe, affirm any thing so ridicu-
 lous and impious. But I will urge this no further. Let us
 propose another Case. The Apostle Paul was as *sincere* in
 his Opposition to Christ, and was as free in this Matter,
 from a *condemning Conscience* as any *Arian* upon Earth ever
 was, and yet he was a *Blasphemer*, a *Persecutor*, and *in-*
jurious, 1 Tim. 1. 13. Had he died in that State, he might
 as *sincerely* have said, that in *those very Things* he had gi-
 ven to the *Searcher of Hearts* the greatest *Proof* of his *ob-*
servant Regard, in doing what he *really* thought tended to
 his Honour, as any Man that *ever erred* in *necessary* Things
 could do. And yet he should not have been vindicated from
 the Names of a *Blasphemer*, *Persecutor*, and *injurious*, which
the Christians in those Days *justly* gave, or might have given
 him; and which he might have called *vile Aspersions*. If
 any should here say, that there is a great Difference betwixt
speculative and *practical* Errors, and that therefore *Saul*
 might have been *justly* condemned for being a *Persecutor*
 and *injurious* to his Neighbour without a Cause: Let him
 remember that he was a *Blasphemer* too, and that there
 were strict Laws given by God himself against all *false Wor-*
ship, and *false Religions*, as he *really* thought *Christianity*
 to be, which were to be executed by the *High Priest* and
Sanhedrim, whose Commission this *Persecutor* carried with
 him, Acts 9. 2. And therefore he could not think what he
 did

did *injurious*, but *agreeable* to the Law of God; and *conducive* to his Neighbour's *true Interest*. And as to the Controversy between you and me, I must again say, that *the Doctrine of the Trinity* is a *practical Truth*, which has an Influence upon *the whole* of our Practice, even *all the Acts* of Faith, Worship and Obedience. And it is monstrous to say, that our thinking will alter the nature of Things, make *false* Worship *true* Worship, what God has *strictly* forbidden acceptable, &c. I might propose a great many other Things to this Purpose, but the Matter is too plain to need any. The Truth is, if what you have allowed above be right, all this Talk, and a great deal more from you, is mere *Cant*. Suffer me to add, that sad Experience may teach me to my Sorrow, to say with you, that *blind Rage*, or *religious Bigotry*, is *indeed generally the most devilish of any Thing*.

In the same Page we have another Maxim; "God will approve the erroneous that are sincere and diligent, when the lazy and thoughtless, who are Orthodox by Chance, shall meet with the smartest Rebukes for the neglect of the Talent committed to them *." This *wild Assertion* is here boldly affirmed without any pretence of a Proof. Your Heart was full of it, and it must out. Hitherto you have spoken of *the Sincere*, but now of *the Erroneous who are sincere*; hereby *openly* declaring that I have not mistaken the chief Design of your Discourse, that providing a Man be *what you call Sincere and Diligent*, the Result of his *sincere Diligence*, be it *Truth* or the *most material Error*, is so far from being *sinful* or dangerous, that it is his *Righteousness*, for which he shall be *approved* of God. Let us observe upon it. The *Thoughtless*, in my Judgment, can have no Faith at all. The *Lazy* who believe they know not *what*, nor *why*, are little better. The *Thoughtless and Lazy*, if they have any Faith at all, may and should remember, that a *dead, speculative, implicit Faith* cannot save them. *Orthodox by Chance*; I presume you mean those, who by their *Education* or *Conversation*, are taught and believe what is indeed *Orthodoxy*, without their *sincere* and *diligent Inquiry*. The Expression at best is very *unsavoury*, and much better becoming a *Pagan* than a *Christian*. God hath determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of the Habitation of all Men, who dwell on all the Face of the Earth, Acts 17. 26. Our *Conversation* also, as well as *Education*, with and among the *Orthodox*, is wisely and mercli-

fully directed by Providence ; and a good Providence it is in it self, and often thro' the Goodness of God, proves a Mean of Conversion and Salvation. Was Mr. Ball born in England, in a Day of Gospel-Light, by Chance ? Was it by Chance that he was the Son of an ejected Minister ; had good Education, having his Mind early tinged with Impressions of Truth and Virtue ; and had the opportunity of hearing some of the best Preachers of that Age, or any Age ? Surely you will not be so ungrateful to Providence as to say it. Men, even they who are not sincere Enquirers, who are Orthodox, came not to be so by Chance, but by the good Providence of God conducting and managing all Things, beyond their own Design. And such a Profession may have good Effects, if not upon themselves, yet upon their Families and Acquaintances ; at least they are by this means preserved from being poison'd with Error, which they might have been, had these Professors been erroneous. But if you will still plead that some Men are Orthodox by Chance ; let me tell you, that if we may believe this Parable, some Men come not to be Heterodox by Chance. Well, but you will have it that God will approve of the erroneous that are sincere and diligent. But who told you so ? Has God any were said so ? I think not. Must we believe this upon your Word, tho you positively asserted the contrary in another part of your Sermon, as we have observed above. He that is diligent in a right Way, after a right Manner, from a right Principle, to a right End, in the use of right Means, shall certainly be approved : But whether God will approve Diligence in an erroneous Course, is the Question. Diligence here seems to me to make things much worse. We have already spoken of the Apostle Paul's Sincerity when a Persecutor. Now whether our Lord approved of it or not ; these Words, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me *, clearly shew that he did not approve of his Diligence. It is, indeed, I think, manifest, that when one has got into a wrong Way, the farther he goes, the more assiduously and unweariedly he follows it, he sins still the more. Would it not have been enough to have told us, that God would wink at them, pass by them, or not lay those Sins to their Charge, at least not condemn them for their Errors ; none of which you can prove : but we are assured he will approve them. This is a Flight indeed ! But Confidence must be called in, when no other Arguments are at Hand. We shall wait your Proof. I must also add, not-

* Acts 9. 4.

withstanding your Assurance here, that I cannot see, why he who *lays up his Lord's Talent in a Napkin*, making *no use* of it at all, should be thought so much more worthy of the *smartest Rebukes*, than he who makes *a bad, or a very bad use* of it.

In the next Page you say, " and indeed were there any doctrinal Propositions necessary to be believed, whether we can understand them or not, to escape the Damnation of Hell, not only Massacres and Persecution, but also an infallible Judge would be necessary*." How you brought in this strange Stuff, in this Place, where your Subject was *the future World*, I know not. I am heartily sorry that ever there have been any " Outrages and Murders committed under the pretence of keeping Men in, or bringing them to a right Faith." We have told you before, that *some Truths* are necessary to be believed by all who have the Scriptures; that *all necessary Truths* may be understood, and you have *granted more*; that there is Danger in *not understanding* the Word, but more in *misunderstanding* it: And now add, that we have an *infallible Judge*, even God himself speaking in his Word; that *Persecution* can hardly be supposed to have a stronger Effect upon Men, than *the Fear of Damnation*; that if what you have granted be true, we have no need of an *human infallible Judge*; and that *Massacres* are so far from being *proper Means* to bring Men to believe Propositions they *understand not*, that they *infallibly* put them beyond *the Possibility of believing them at all*.

I shall wave several Things in the two next Pages, and only observe one Sentence, *pag. 30.* " The Security they have for this Inheritance, is *that God is their Father: God is not ashamed to be called their God*, who are upright and faithful, *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10. And another, *pag. 32.* " God bears such an Affection to all his Children, that they are upon that Account secure of this Inheritance, as well as by his Promise." It is strange there is no mention of *Christ* here, neither as the *Surety* of the Covenant, nor *the Believers Head and Advocate*, &c. I am afraid he was left out by Design. God's Promise is indeed a good Security; but *all the Promises of God are in Christ, yea, and in him, Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. His Love also, I grant, makes all sure; but he *loves none but in Christ*. God himself was pleased, that they who had *fled for Refuge* might have strong Consolation,

* Page 28.

to confirm his Promise with an Oath, Heb. 6. 17, 18. Not to make it any surer in it self, for he is a God that cannot lye †, but for the strengthening of their Faith. Might not you then have taken notice of God's Covenant, even the New Testament, which is confirmed by the Death of the Blessed Testator **, and which is indeed the Charter, by which the Believer, vitally united to Christ, claims the Inheritance. Is it not the Blood of Christ, that makes all sure, sure on both sides? Yes, it is. This is that which confirms the Covenant: And Faith in it gives us Assurance, that all the Promises of it shall be fulfilled to us. I am satisfied, the Believer could never think himself safe, (being conscious of so many daily Sins) even by and with the Promise and Love of God, but as they are both secured to him, in, and by, and thro', and for the great Surety. Yea the Words you cite, Rev. 2. 10. as the Father's Promise, are Christ's Words. I took Notice before, that there was not one Word of the assisting Grace of God, nor the sanctifying Influences of the Spirit in your whole Discourse; and must now say, that there is almost as little of the Grace of Christ, the Virtue and Efficacy of his Death, the blessed Fruits of it, and the gracious Benefits flowing therefrom; even tho the Kingdom you are speaking of, is the Purchase of his Blood. But I have observed, that those Men, who so very zealously strive to make so little of our Redeemer, have very wisely left him as little to do, and expect as little from him, as possible.

The Paragraph P. 21. is one of the most admirable of all, it runs thus:

' The Kingdom is originally the Father's; we are taught
' to ascribe it to him by our Saviour himself; *Thine is the*
' *Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* Elsewhere it is styled the Kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ *; and
' therefore shall be given to them for whom it is prepared
' of the Father †. When any one became the Subject of
' it, our Saviour gave Thanks to the Father, *I thank thee, O*
' *Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid*
' *these Things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed*
' *them unto Babes* ‡. Our Saviour doth not give God
' Thanks that he hid from Men the Means of Light, but that
' having granted them such Benefits, when many, thro' their
' Sloth, Pride, and Obstinacy, neglected and despised those
' Counsels, God, upon this Account, leaving them under

† Tit. 1. 2.

** Heb. 9. 15—18.

* Rev. 11. 15.

‡ Mat. 20. 22.

† Luke 10. 21.

(85)
‘ their own Blindness, yet had blessed the Meek and Humble
‘ in their Endeavours, so that they did see the Things which
‘ belonged to their Peace. In short, this Text is the same
‘ in Sense with that other where it is said, *God resisteth the
‘ Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble* **.’

“ The Kingdom is originally the Father’s.” What you mean by this I know not, nor, perhaps, do you your self. If you intend that the Kingdom of Glory, is *more* the Father’s, more *absolutely* so than the Son’s; or that it was *the Father’s before* it was the Son’s; all these I positively deny. Nor doth the Passage referred to *Matth. 6. 13. For thine is the Kingdom, &c. prove that it was originally his.* Nay, it does not answer your Purpose at all; the Kingdom in your Text is the *State and Place* of Glory; the Kingdom there, if I mistake not, signifies *the sovereign Government and Disposal of all Things.* This is that we are to ascribe to *our Father who is in Heaven.* I have shown in my Sermon, that this Kingdom is styled *the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; but it is no where styled *the Kingdom of the Lord, and of his Christ*, as you say to us. The Text referred to *Rev. 11. 15.* speaks of *Kingdoms* in the plural number, the *Kingdoms of this World* becoming *the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*, by a visible Profession of the Gospel in its Purity, after their Reformation from the *Superstitions, Idolatrys, and Tyranny of Antichrist*: But the Kingdom spoken of in the Text, is the Kingdom of Glory, which is but *one*, and that *above.* Is this your Way to quote Texts, to do it by rote, or because there are some Words in them that *chime* together? I shall not ask you whether you was dreaming; but one would have thought that your *learned Amanuensis*, who *knows all these Things so well*, should have given you a Jogg, and prevented at least such Blunders. “ And therefore, &c.” Pray shew how one of these Propositions depends upon the other. Your next Text, *Luke 10. 21.* is yet less to your Purpose; for there is not so much as the Word *Kingdom* in it, to chime with your Subject; nor any such Word for ten Verses backward, nor one and twenty forward, nor indeed in the whole Chapter but twice, and even then it is not *the Kingdom of Glory* that is meant, but *the Kingdom of Grace*, the Gospel Dispensation. Nor did our Saviour in this Place give Thanks to *the Father, when, because, or upon the Account* of any Persons becoming *the Subjects* of the Kingdom of Glory, of

** Jam. 4. 6.

which there is not the least Word in that Chapter. And if your next Sentence be true, it confirms what I have here said. The Exposition you give of the Text, tho it is none of your own, is one of the *flattest* Contradictions to the Words of our Lord that can be; is *diametrically* opposite to his whole Scope; and, if I mistake not, *inconsistent* with it self. I shall not question your *Sincerity*, but I am sure, that if you can find that I have put such a Sense upon your Words, contrary to their *known obvious* meaning, you would expose me to the World, and *very justly*, as a *Creature* that could write or speak any thing. To cut off Dispute, I shall allow with you, that the things intended are the Means of Light. But by *hiding*, you think our Lord means *giving*, and then because of the Sins of some, leaving them under their own Blindness. These *slothful, proud, and obstinate Persons* he calls *the wise and prudent*, and by *Babes* he means the *meek and humble*. Now if this be a fair Way of interpreting Words, I shall for ever despair of knowing any thing by such *mutable, useless* Signs. Here is not a Word of *giving* the Means to *the wise and prudent*, but of *hiding* them. To *hide the Means of Light*, and to *leave the obstinate under their own Blindness*, are, I think very different Things. It is *perfectly precarious* to say, that by the *wise and prudent* our Lord means *the proud and obstinate*; nor can you give any such Instance in the Bible. It is so far from being strange, that God should *leave the slothful, proud and obstinate, under their own Blindness*, and *blest the meek and humble* in their Endeavours, that every one would expect he would do so, it appears so *right and fit* even to Men. If this is the Sense, there was no Occasion for this *so solemn an Acknowledgment* of a thing which every one sees was so reasonable; yea, which could hardly be otherwise: And much less to mention the *sovereign good Pleasure* of God, as the Cause of all, and that into which all is resolved. This Sense is directly contrary to the Scope of our Lord, as may be seen by any that will look into the Context, and *Mat. 11*. The plain meaning appears to me to be this; I acquiesce, O Father, in thy *wise, holy, and sovereign Pleasure*, in that thou hast granted the *Revelation* of thy Will to the most *unlikely Persons, the foolish, the ignorant, the weak*, who are but *Babes* in Knowledge, and denied this great Mercy to *the noble, the wise, the learned, the Disputer of this World*. I fully approve of it, and resolve it all into thy *wise and righteous Will*, who mayest do with *thine own what thou pleasest*. I grant there is much more intended, and when both Senses are taken in, you may find an excellent Comment

ment upon this Text in Words of much the same Import, 1 Cor. i. 26—29. *For you see your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish and weak, &c.* You say, that this Text is the same in Sense with that, *James 4. 6. God resisteth the proud, and giveth Grace to the humble.* I can hardly see how it should be so; nor indeed is it so. And I conceive when you read the Texts and Contexts over again, you may be of the same Mind. The *Scope, Connection, and Words* manifestly differ, and how *the Sense* should be the same I know not. And thus I have done for the present with the doctrinal part of your Sermon.

As to the Character you give the deceased, I shall only say, That I never grudged any Man his *just* Praise; nor did I ever in any Case detract from him or you, (tho you know I have had Provocations enough) if it was not in speaking of this Sermon. Nor did I ever attempt to lessen the *just* (whether moral or learned) Character, even of an *Arian*; no, I have a Soul above such Things. If he had indeed any Enemies for Conscience sake, I was none of them; nor no Man's. Nor have I yet shewn any Signs of Enmity even against your Friend, who has deserved as much, if not more of this at my Hand, than any Man, perhaps, in the World doth of his Neighbour. But I shall say no more now—Some mean Things were upon the Wheel, and—Time will shew Events little thought of.

As I waved your Preamble altogether, so shall I your Conclusion; tho there are some Things in them may be considered hereafter. And thus I conclude. I have *fairly* proposed your own Words, and *freely* answered them. I have not urged what I might *reasonably* have done upon many Passages, and have *intirely* omitted others very censurable. If I have any where mistaken your Sense, I am sure I did it not willingly: It seems hard to fix the Meaning of several loose and *ambiguous* Expressions; but if I have, I dispute not against you, but the Sense I have put upon your Words, and shall be exceeding glad to hear that you *deny* them, and to be satisfied you have not gone *so far from the Truth*, as I have supposed. I have considered all that I could find in your Discourse upon the same Subject, and allowed it all the *Weight* which I thought it had. If I have represented any of your Positions in *frightful Colours*, they appeared to me the *plain Language* of the Principles themselves, rather than their Consequences. But if I have charged any *such Things* upon you, it was because I could not see how they could be

be evaded; and yet I have not *accused* you with *believing* them no, I abhor such Things. I say not this upon my own account, for if I hold *Premises*, I shall firmly adhere to all the *Conclusions* you can *fairly* draw from them, or I will without *Shame* quit the *Premises*. I confess I have treated some Parts with *much Freedom*, for several Reasons you may know, and chiefly for this, that *my own Hearers* may not take all your *Maxims* for *uncontested Truths*, or suppose that your *Sayings* need no *Proofs*. And if you find any *such Weaknesses*, less than *childish*, in my Sermon, or in these Remarks, delivered *with the Air of a Dictator*, let them be treated as freely. If you write a Defence, I assure you, if God spare Life and Strength, you shall either have a candid Antagonist, or a sincere Convert. I am not sensible that I have transgressed the *Rules of Respect and Decency*, or treated *so much Weakness and Confusion* as some would. And as I have in *all Cases* hitherto carried it to you *civilly, peaceably, sincerely, and honourably*, without any mean Design, or the least Appearance of any. So I am resolved never to be wanting in my Place to pay you all the Duties which the *Law of God* obliges me to pay to my *Neighbour*; and declare with *the old Sincerity*, that I shall always be very ready to serve you. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

Andover, 22 Feb.
1726-7.

DAV. MILLAR

FINIS,

ERRATA.

PAGE 34. l. 35. for *within* r. *were in*. p. 52. l. 38, 39. for *not only believe*, r. *not only do not believe*. p. 55. l. 26. for *misquainted*, r. *acquainted*. p. 57. l. 42. for *best*, r. *best*. p. 58. l. 29. for *which* r. *where*. p. 80. l. 13. for *This* r. *His*.